THE FRONT: A MILITARY ANALYSIS *by Colonel T.*

NEW MASSES

BRITAIN AND THE USSR

TWO CABLES FROM LONDON BY

R. PALME DUTT *and* CLAUDE COCKBURN

WHY THIS IS OUR WAR

By the Editors

THE TRUTH ABOUT SOVIET TRANSPORT

By William Abbott

Congressman Sabath Writes on Aid to the Soviet Union

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY JULY 8, 1941

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Between Ourselves

WE DON'T know just how many people NM reached over the air with its special broadcast last Friday night, but it must have been plenty judging from the letters that have been coming in. But first, for the benefit of those who missed the broadcast, let us explain: NM editors felt that a discussion of the issues in the Soviet-Nazi war, addressed to as large an audience as possible, was important enough to merit purchase of radio time. So we bought fifteen minutes from Station WQXR and used it for an analytic dialogue between Joseph North and Ruth McKenney. It was, one of our correspondents assures us, "very fine." And the radio station reports that it received numerous telephone calls saying pretty much the same thing. Excuse us if we seem to brag a little; it isn't often that we strain our always shaky budget for the cost entailed in even fifteen minutes of radio time, and we are both proud and gratified to know that the results justified it.

From New Jersey a listener-in writes: "One of the luckiest breaks I ever had—I had just happened to turn on my radio five minutes before when the announcer said 'New Masses,' and I got in on the broadcast from beginning to end. Hadn't seen the notices of it beforehand. It was a beautiful job and I don't know which impressed me most, the amount of information that North and McKenney got into that quarter-hour or the fine clarity of their discussion. Believe me, it made some other 'news analysts' look very sick. I wouldn't take all the big advertiser-sponsored 'authorities on the world situation' that there are for those fifteen minutes. They were a 'Guide to the Soviet-Nazi War' which, like your special issue on that subject, left me feeling that I had had a good, satisfying meal that was a pleasure to digest."

Another letter praises "your calm, sure voices in contrast to the bombast and rhetoric that passes for unbiased interpretation of the news." Some of our correspondents are evidently under the impression that an NM broadcast is to be a weekly affair. We only wish that were possible but, of course, it isn't. However, we do plan to hammer as hard as possible at the job of continuing our "Guide to the Soviet-Nazi War" in NM's pages, with special editorials and articles on all angles. There's been a large and cordial response to the "Guide" too, which more than recompenses us for the strenuous labor that went into preparing the issue.

Two internationally famous writers will help us carry on the "Guide," beginning with this issue. They are R. Palme Dutt and Claude Cockburn, whose cabled dispatches appear on pages 7 and 8. Dutt, who edits the British *Labour Monthly,* and Cockburn, former editor of the newsletter the *Week,* have promised to write regularly for us, following up their analysis in this issue with cables on future developments. (For the reasons why that in large part depends on you please see the back cover.) Also, "Colonel T," whose long professional military experience is demonstrated on page 9 of this issue, will do a regular analysis of the war situation from the standpoint of battles, maneuvers, etc.

Some weeks ago NM remarked in "Between Ourselves" that the dramatic season did not end with the Broadway closings, but was continued at camps and resorts. We also said that we would cover as many of the revues and plays as possible. From a number of the camps we have received word that their theater activities are getting off to a full start now, with several features definitely scheduled. At Allaben Acres, a company under the direction of Ann Gerlete will present *Success Story,* the Lawson play introduced by the Group Theater several seasons ago. The Pens and Pencils troupe will present the third annual version of their peppy student revue at Camp Beacon. Maud's Summer Ray will have, in addition to their Sunday night concert ensembles, a full-length show featuring the Modicot Marionettes, Dova and Delikova, a Russian Classical dance team; Peter Haden, English ballet dancer; and Louis Freilich of the Artef company. Camp Unity will feature a large number of old favorites, including Saul Arons and Sidney Bechet, as well as Lili Mann who will present a new show with sketches, skits, and lyrics.

A number of letters have come from the Deep South thanking Blaine Owen for his article in our June 24 issue on Ralph Gray, pioneer builder of the Share Croppers Union, who died ten years ago at the hands of labor's enemies. From Ralph Gray's own state of Alabama, a NM subscriber writes that the article "made Ralph live again for me. I'm not a writer myself and I've always hoped that someone who could do the job would really get down in words the personality of Ralph Gray and what he meant to the labor movement down here. Mr. Owen has certainly done that and we—those who knew Ralph Gray or know of him—are grateful for it."

Barbara Giles' report on the American Newspaper Guild convention in Detroit was postponed because of the pressure of setting last-minute copy. It will appear in an early issue.

Who's Who

R. PALME DUTT is among the foremost Marxist analysts in the English speaking world. He is the editor of the British *Labor Monthly* and author of several books. . . . Claude Cockburn was editor of the internationally known newsletter *The Week.* He was also Washington correspondent of the London *Times.* . . . Colonel T. is the pseudonym of a former army officer and writer on military subjects. . . . William Abbott is a student of Soviet economic affairs. . . . Adam Lapin is NM's Washington correspondent. . . . Thomas L. Rogers is a Philadelphia social worker. . . . Elise Moorer is a New York newspaper woman. . . . Herbert Biberman is a well known director living in Hollywood.

Flashbacks

ON JULY 8, 1932, a hunger march of 12,000 workers in Minneapolis forced the City Council to abolish "volunteer," i.e., "forced" labor requirements made of those on relief. . . . In Berlin, Ernest Thaelmann, German Communist leader who has been in Hitler's concentration camp since 1933, met twenty Social Democrats on July 8, 1932, for the purpose of forming an anti-fascist united front. The Social Democrats declined to work jointly with the Communists. . . . Japanese Army Headquarters at Tientsin, on July 7, 1937, created the incident which began the invasion of North and Central China. . . . The head of Jack Cade, war veteran, organizer, and rebel, looked down on the hungry thousands from a pike on London Bridge, July 12, 1450. For presenting the "Complaint of the Commons of Kent" and leading the army of 20,000 workmen and peasants, he was captured, decapitated. . . . July 6 marks the anniversary of the beginning of the successful New York actors' strike in 1919.

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NEW MASSES

VOLUME XL JULY 8 NUMBER 2

WHY THIS IS OUR WAR

History takes another sharp turn. Transformations in the character of the war. New tactics and new values. How to defend our country by helping the USSR. An editorial.

THAT famous locomotive of history has taken another sudden turn. And as in 1939, there may be a few who find themselves flung off and sprawling by the roadside because they lost their grip in rounding the bend. We live in dynamic times, when the processes of history mature so rapidly that we must be prepared for cataclysmic changes that overnight transform values, meanings, relationships. Actually, what appears to be sudden is merely the explosive emergence of forces that have been in gestation over months and years. Last week NEW MASSES devoted almost its entire issue to a discussion of the momentous turning point signalized by the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. Since then, the implications of that attack have become clearer. Throughout the country the common folk have begun to sense them. In their hearts indignation mingles with hope—hope that at last the hideous might of Hitlerism has met its master and that the fight to free the world from this scourge has begun in earnest. In Chicago the Cook County CIO Council adopted a resolution calling for "cooperation and support to the Soviet Union by our government." In New York, Local 16 of the AFL Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, which is under conservative leadership, urged support for "all nations attacked by Hitler fascism, including the Soviet Union." In the Northwest the Washington Commonwealth Federation spoke up for aid to the USSR. Among the Jewish people there has been such unanimity of feeling that even bitterly anti-Soviet Yiddish newspapers have been compelled to adapt themselves to the prevailing mood. On street corners, at meetings, in homes throughout the country Americans of all nationalities, deeply stirred, have found their sympathies suddenly catapulted to a country whom their press and radio had depicted in the most hateful terms as an ally of fascism.

In this new vast shift in world affairs all of us are faced with the necessity of reexamining our position. For if we are to work with and not against history, if we are to lift from the minds of men the blighting shadow of fascism, we must grasp the essential meaning of the new situation and make our acts conform to the changed reality. It is impossible at this time to give definitive answers to all the problems that emerge, but the central fact that must be understood is that *the attack of German fascism on the USSR has changed the character of the war.* And one need not apologize for saying that when the character of the war changes, programs, slogans, and tactics must also change. While basic principles and ultimate goals remain the same, they must now be approached by a different road because the old road has disappeared under the impact of the Soviet-Nazi war.

For nearly two years NEW MASSES opposed the war that began in September 1939 and all American support for one side in that conflict. But our opposition was not to war as such—we are not pacifists and know that only socialism can bring lasting peace—nor was it based on the isolationist illusion that what happens in Europe or Asia does not affect the American people. We opposed the war because, like its predecessor in 1914-18, it represented nothing more than a struggle between two imperialist groups for a new redivision of plunder and empire. A victory for either side in such a war could result not in the liberation of enslaved peoples, but in their further subjugation by one or the other set of imperialist masters under fascist controls. We therefore called on the American people to oppose the designs of the government and to join with the English people and the peoples under the fascist heel in working for a different alternative: a democratic people's peace which would mean a defeat for both contending imperialist groups. We emphasized that in this struggle the common people of all countries had a powerful ally in the Soviet Union, which had striven to prevent the war and when that proved impossible, had negotiated the non-aggression pact with Germany in order to safeguard its neutrality and limit the spread of the conflict. At the same time NEW MASSES opposed not only the policy of the government, but also the reactionary non-interventionists at the head of the America First Committee. We pointed out the spurious character of the peace talk of the latter group, and exposed their pro-fascist, imperialist aims.

Looking back today, we believe that our policy of the past two years has been fully vindicated. We are proud of the part we played in helping clarify the issues and nourishing all that was best in American life. In our struggle against fascism, just as in our solidarity with the peoples of Great Britain and Germany, there is an unbroken continuity even though the forms and tactics of this activity now require change. For the policy of the past two years no longer corresponds to the actual world situation that has been created by the Nazi assault on the USSR. For the first time a country has become involved which seeks no loot, which has no capitalist class that can profit by exploiting the wealth of other nations. For the first time a country is fighting—a great federation of 193,000,000 free peoples—whose victory will mean not the replacement of one fascist cabal by another, but the true liberation of the peoples of Europe and the ending of the fascist threat to the common folk of England and the Americas. And for the first time this new development expresses not the conflict between two imperialist bandits, but *the direct assault of fascist imperialism on the people—on the people everywhere.* By that assault Hitler has faced all peoples with the necessity of *uniting their forces to wipe Hitlerism and fascism from the face of the earth. Only in this way can a genuine people's peace be achieved.*

For those who may be unable to see why the invasion of the Soviet Union changes the character of the war, let us put the matter this way. Suppose our government had previously adopted the policy we urged of strict neutrality in the European war and collaboration with the USSR for peace. This would have aligned the two greatest powers of the world whose joint efforts would have decisively affected the course of the war and perhaps made possible a people's peace. But even had Germany won, she would still have been faced with the combination of the Soviet Union and the United States. Today, with the invasion of the USSR, there is no longer the question of another Yugoslavia or Greece, but of the possible destruction of a power approximately equal to that of the United States. Moreover, since Siberia is separated from the American-owned Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska by only a narrow strip of water, a Nazi victory over the USSR would bring the fascist threat to the very shores of our own country. It is clear that with the Soviet Union and Britain conquered, the United States would indeed be left alone in a world under Nazi domination. Here, then, is conclusive evidence that the character of the war has been fundamentally altered.

THE ARGUMENT will be made that the imperialists of Britain and the United States continue to seek their former objectives. Three things need to be said on this score: first, if the British and American governments strike energetically at Germany, they willy-nilly are helping the Soviet Union and their own peoples exterminate Hitlerism. Every British

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bomb dropped on German military objectives furthers this end. Secondly, by their offers of aid to the USSR the British and American governments are abandoning their former anti-Soviet policy. They are thereby beginning to adopt the course long advocated by the British People's Convention and by progressives in this country. And finally, the peoples of Britain and the United States have the duty to take advantage of this exceptional situation, in which their governments are necessarily on the same side with the people's government of the USSR, to compel their rulers to undertake without delay the closest collaboration with the Soviet Union in order to assure a smashing defeat of German fascism. Such a defeat would likewise frustrate the aims of the most reactionary Wall Street and London imperialists. What is required is *the creation of the broadest people's front directed against Hitlerism at home and abroad, part of an international front of all the peoples fighting the monstrous juggernaut of Nazism.*

Marxists judge each war concretely in its fullest historical context. During the nineteenth century Marx and Engels always supported one side as against the other in the wars of Europe and in our own Civil War. Their position in every situation was dictated by the interests of the working class, by consideration of what course would promote the advance of mankind. Thus in the Franco-Prussian war they at first supported Bismarck Germany, despite the reactionary character of the regime, because they viewed this phase of the war as a struggle for national unification against the efforts of Napoleon III to dismember a Germany still suffering from semi-feudal separatism. The founders of scientific Communism warned, however, of the possibility that the war might take a reactionary turn. When after the battle of Sedan and the fall of the French monarchy Bismarck continued the war in order to annex Alsace-Lorraine and subjugate the French people, Marx and Engels opposed Germany.

It was only with the rise of imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century, when capitalism, ceasing to be a progressive force, entered the parasitic monopoly stage, that wars among the great powers assumed a completely reactionary form. That is why the genuine Marxists in Russia, Germany and other countries, and especially the Russian Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin, opposed the war of 1914-18 as imperialist on both sides. But Lenin did not entirely exclude the possibility, remote though it was, that the first imperialist war might be transformed into a national war, that is, a progressive struggle for national liberation and independence. In an article written in 1915 he pointed out that "in a condition of great exhaustion of the 'great' powers in the present war or under conditions of a victory of the revolution in Russia, national wars, and indeed victorious ones, are fully possible." In another article written in the same year he pointed out that if all countries interested in maintaining international treaties had declared war on Germany and genuinely fought for no other purpose than the liberation of Belgium, "the sympathy of the Socialists would naturally be on the side of Germany's enemies." He added, however, that in the war that was then raging Belgium was a mere pretext in a conflict for purely imperialist objectives. In the same way the invasion of Poland in 1939 was a pretext in a war precipitated by the rivalry and intrigue of two imperialist blocs. But if in 1914-18 it was theoretically possible for the character of the war to be changed, how much truer is that today when the enormous weight of the land of socialism is thrown into the scales? Clearly, whatever the motives of British and American imperialism, the involvement of the Soviet Union has introduced a powerful magnetic force which can draw around itself the peoples on both sides of the conflict in an all-out struggle for their own national salvation. And the magnificent efforts of the Chinese people to drive out Hitler's axis partner, the Japanese invader, now become more directly linked to the world struggle against fascism.

DOES THE FACT of the USSR's involvement mean that its previous policy was mistaken, as so many anti-Soviet commentators hasten to point out? On the contrary, the Soviet Union has been forced into the war under conditions that are infinitely more favorable for itself than they would have been two years ago, lacking any British and French guarantees. Testimony to the correctness of Soviet policy has come inferentially from no less an anti-Sovieteer than Dorothy Thompson. In her column on June 25 discussing the Hess episode and its relation to the Nazi attack on the USSR she wrote: "It is my belief that Hitler was making a tremendous gamble on Britain getting out of the war, as a result of this development [the Nazi attack]. *Were the same political brains ruling England that ruled it up until two years ago, exactly that would have happened.*" (Our emphasis.) What Miss Thompson is here unwittingly admitting is that the Soviet government was fully justified in believing that the Chamberlain government, under the cloak of friendly overtures, was actually seeking to involve it singlehanded in war against Germany. And hence she is also admitting that the USSR was fully justified in taking steps to protect itself against that stratagem by negotiating the non-aggression pact with Germany.

Let it be remembered that it was the Soviet Union which repeatedly sought an alliance of peoples and governments to halt fascist aggression. And it was the governments of Britain and France—and for that matter, the United States—that rebuffed these efforts, only to cry "doublecross" when faced with the disastrous consequences of their own treachery. Had that alliance been effectuated in time, it would probably have prevented the war; had war come nevertheless, it would from the outset have had a progressive character on the part of the collective security bloc and the defeat of Hitlerism would have been a much simpler task than it is today. By frustrating the schemes of the appeasers, the USSR gained almost two years of precious time. During this period its own economic and military might has greatly increased and its strategic position improved through the extension of its borders, while the crisis of German fascism, despite one military victory after another, has deepened. And now when the long-awaited attack has been launched, it has come in a situation in which the British and American governments, instead of being able to isolate the Soviet Union, are compelled, because of their inability to resolve their imperialist differences with Germany, to offer assistance to the USSR. Thus, when the radio commentator, Johannes Steel, concedes that the Soviet policy in the Baltics was justified after all, he indicates that it was he and such liberal magazines as the *Nation* and the *New Republic* that erred when they hailed the white guard Finnish regime as a genuine democracy. No less did they err in their estimate of other aspects of Soviet policy and of the strength of the Red Army.

THE NEW DEVELOPMENT in the war has created considerable differences and indecision in the circles of big business. The American Munichеers—the leaders of the America First Committee, gentlemen like Herbert Hoover and Gen. Hugh Johnson, sections of the Catholic hierarchy, and newspapers like the Hearst and Scripps-Howard press, the New York *Daily News* and Chicago *Tribune*—have not failed to discover that well-known specter of Communism and to shout themselves hoarse that the United States must do nothing to aid the Soviet Union. By which they mean, of course, that this country must do nothing to prevent a Hitler triumph. These big business appeasers and their "Socialist" satellites of the Norman Thomas stripe would sell the American people and the peoples of Europe down the river to Nazism in the hope of establishing a partnership with Germany for the fascist domination of the world. The real objective of this crowd is revealed by Thomas F. Woodlock, prominent Catholic layman and Franco supporter, in the *Wall Street Journal* of June 30. He writes:

> It [the Nazi attack] *may* portend the breaking of the Hitler "spell" under which Germany has lain for nearly a decade, and the sweeping out of the whole Hitler crew, with a man like Schacht and the army in the seat of power. With such a Germany there could be a basis of reasonable negotiation. No one knows better than the army chiefs the hollowness of the German "conquests" in western Europe—unless it be Schacht himself. But the Russian affair is quite different; that can last and pay dividends. With the Ukraine in German hands and German development applied to it, the rest of Russia does not matter nor does western Europe, once the Hitler nightmare has vanished and the New Order goes up in smoke. . . . A highly attractive picture, and it stirs up the wish-bone no end!

This offer of the Ukraine and readiness

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to come to terms with the Nazis (whether it involves the elimination of the individual Hitler is a detail) is, of course, only the first installment. Did not Gen. Robert E. Wood, chairman of the America First Committee, in an interview with the newspaper *PM* several weeks ago, intimate that his group would not object to Hitler's taking over the whole of Latin America below the bulge of Brazil?

The Nazi invasion of the USSR has also caused certain reactionaries, who previously were ardent interventionists, to adopt a position virtually identical with that of the appeasers. The veteran tory journalist, Mark Sullivan, for example, has attacked President Roosevelt's promise of aid to the Soviet Union as a mistake. He urges, in the spirit of Hoover, that assistance be confined to Britain. Another attitude, representing the major Wall Street trend, seeks to utilize the new situation for the purpose of mutually exhausting the USSR and Germany in order to secure the dominance of American imperialism. This point of view has been stated with a brutality and cynicism worthy of Hitler himself by Heptisax, the Sunday commentator of the New York *Herald Tribune*. He rejoices at the thought that "the bear [the USSR] is outclassed and is in for a thorough licking" (Heptisax is due for an unpleasant surprise in this respect). On the theory that the Soviet Union is weak, he therefore urges American material aid to "enable her to make a Russo-German, or rather Nazi-Communist, war of mutual destruction thoroughgoing." This aid, however, should be cut off "if the Nazi juggernaut crumbles up." In other words Heptisax opposes the defeat of German fascism.

The position of Heptisax (in a less candid form it is also the position of the New York *Times* and the capitalist groups for which it speaks) is in essence oblique appeasement of Hitlerism. The *Times* goes so far as to declare that the slogan of "Help Russia" (which is, in effect, the slogan issued by President Roosevelt) should be dropped, that attention be concentrated on stopping Hitler and that this can best be done by redoubling aid to Britain. All the talk about the physical difficulty of sending assistance to the USSR serves the same end. This policy, if allowed to prevail, would have the effect of immobilizing the people and the government in face of the greatest peril to our nation. By posing one front against another this attitude actually divides the forces fighting Hitlerism. There is, however, only one war and aid to both the British and Soviet peoples is essential if fascism is to be defeated.

It is clear that the American people will have to combat these big business obstructionists in the most determined fashion. They are the forces that led the fight against the Roosevelt administration and the New Deal reforms before the outbreak of the war. And through their positions of influence in the OPM, the State and War Departments, and other government agencies, they are seeking once more to prevent the administration from taking that path which alone can safeguard the liberties of the people. In this situation the clear voice of the Communist Party points the way. "Through their organized efforts," declares the manifesto unanimously adopted at the recent meeting of its national committee, "the American people must make the policy of the American government a genuine policy of friendship and collaboration with the Soviet Union, a policy that gives *all aid to the Soviet and British peoples*. The American people must throw in the full weight of their might and power to defeat German fascism." At the same time the manifesto declares that the people "must not fail to speak out plainly against every tendency of the American government to conciliate the enemies of the nation—to appease the appeasers."

All aid to the USSR and Britain, which is in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the American people, must also have its domestic counterpart. The economic royalists who are today obstructing the development of a truly anti-Hitler foreign policy are likewise seeking to force the government to employ Hitler methods against the people at home. An effective fight against Hitlerism requires the defense of the right to strike, improvement of the people's living standards, government action to curb profiteering and prevent monopoly sabotage such as has been revealed in the case of the aluminum trust. It requires the cessation of every form of discrimination against the Negro people, a halt to anti-Semitism and attacks on the foreign-born. And an effective fight against Hitlerism requires an end to the assault on civil liberties, particularly the persecution of Communists and other progressives by the FBI, the Dies committee and the Rapp-Coudert committee. The imprisonment of America's foremost anti-fascist, Earl Browder, stands as a towering indictment of the past character of the government's war effort. His release now would be a blow at Hitler and his American friends and a powerful aid to our own struggle against the fascist menace.

Our country moves to great decisions. We cannot delay because time fights on the side of the enemy. Whether the Roosevelt administration accedes to the wishes of the most reactionary monopolists or lives up to its anti-fascist pronouncements and its pledges of aid to the Soviet Union depends in great part on how quickly and effectively the American people and especially organized labor leap into the breach and weld a solid front of action against Hitlerism. The trade unions must be the mainspring of this movement. All aid to the Soviet Union and Britain, all aid to China must for all of us become the deepest purpose of our lives. We the people can win this battle for the future. We have the power to move mountains, to destroy fascism. *Let us act.*

This editorial statement does not, of course, profess to deal with all the problems that arise. New Masses would welcome questions and discussion from its readers.

Rep. Sabath on Aid to the USSR

NEW MASSES *has invited a number of prominent individuals to comment on the Soviet-Nazi war and on the question of aid to the USSR in order to defeat Hitlerism. In this issue we publish the first of these statements, from Rep. Adolph J. Sabath of Illinois, who is chairman of the House Rules Committee. Months before the Nazi attack Mr. Sabath urged American-Soviet collaboration in a speech in the House. Additional statements will appear in future issues. In publishing them,* NEW MASSES *does not necessarily agree with all that is said. Whatever differences there may be, however, we feel that the most important thing at this time is to unite all those who wish the defeat of Hitlerism behind a program of full assistance to the Soviet Union, Britain, and all peoples fighting Nazism.*—The Editors.

IT IS my candid belief that for our own defense we must give all possible assistance to Britain and China, and to all countries fighting Hitler's aggression, including Russia. I feel that we must approve President Roosevelt's stand to give all aid we are in a position to give to Russia, which does not signify that we approve Communism.

There are some who still refuse to recognize the Nazi danger, but any well informed man will not deny that great danger after all of Hitler's conquest. For several years the Nazis, by their shrewd propaganda, conducted in this country a campaign against Communism to hide their own activities, as they had done in other countries. There are still some who refuse to see and understand the real meaning of this fact.

On March 18, 1938, in a speech on the floor of the House, I made clear the aims and ambitions of Hitler and Nazism. I stated that Britain had waited too long, and was blind to the aims of Hitler, which statement was borne out by subsequent events. So far, Hitler has accomplished everything that he so brazenly said he would. It is regrettable that notwithstanding that fact, there are people who still refuse to believe that it is his aim to destroy democracy everywhere, and that America is next in line if he succeeds in defeating Britain and Russia.

This being the case, for our own self-preservation, we must give all possible assistance to Britain and aid to Russia, to enable them to stop his conquests. Only by his defeat will we be saved from being attacked.

ADOLPH J. SABATH.

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BRITAIN AND THE SOVIET UNION

R. Palme Dutt's cable on "the most titanic conflict in history." Why Hitler attacked at this time. The issues in Britain. The men of Munich and the men of progress.

London (by cable).

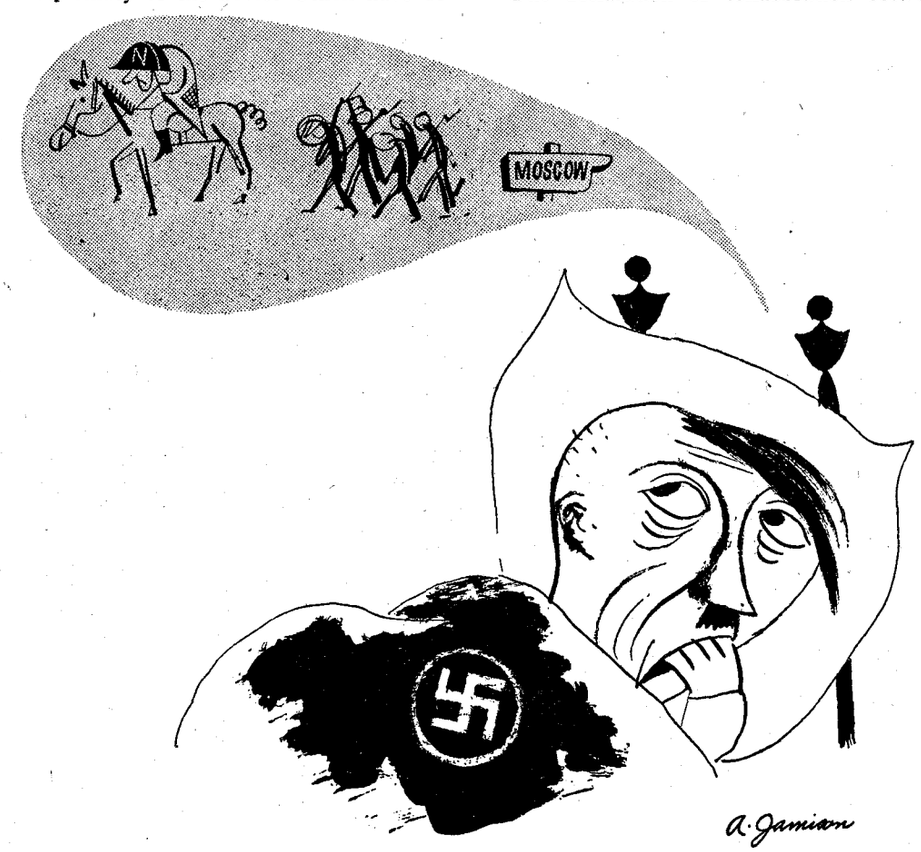
JUNE 22, 1941, opened a new world situation. The battle which is now being waged carries with it the fate of the peoples of all countries and of the international working class movement. This battle is being waged on military fronts where the most titanic conflict in history is now in progress, and in the struggles of peoples in countries enslaved by fascism. It also extends as a political struggle to all countries. The present conflict opens up on a world scale the basic line of division between fascists and the reactionary friends of fascism on the one side, and on the other side, the forces of freedom lined up with the Soviet Union. Nowhere is this issue sharper than in Britain, where avowed Munichites or secret supporters of fascism and leaders of world reaction have always had their center. But where the conflict of imperialist interests led to war between British and German imperialism, in this new situation a temporary agreement has been announced by the British government for collaboration with the Soviet Union. How far this collaboration will seriously be carried out and made effective and how far the reactionaries will succeed in sabotaging it and turning it in an opposite direction is the decisive issue at present in Britain. And its outcome will depend on the conscious and active role of the working class and the democratic movement.

Why did Hitler attack at this moment? From the spring of this year it was evident that the war had reached its most critical turning point. German imperialism had established its domination in western and central Europe. The last military front in Europe was eliminated with the British evacuation of Greece and the Balkans. It was evident that the imperialist struggle could only go forward as a full world war with the prospective entry of the United States and with the possible entry of Japan. But there was hesitation in all imperialist camps. They feared the growing revolt of the people and the growing strength of the Soviet Union. There was talk of the possibility of a compromise imperialist peace on the basis of the existing situation and the possibility of transforming the war into a war against the USSR. Symptomatic of this situation was the Hess episode on which the British government still maintains a complete official silence. Whether or not Hess brought with him an official overture from the Wilhelmstrasse to Downing Street, it is evident that his visit served very effectively the purpose of the feeler, which laid bare the deep division in the British ruling class. Hitler, encouraged by this division and the obvious sympathy of the reactionaries in Britain and the United States for his anti-Soviet aims, and driven by necessity for speedy action in view of the advancing preparations of Anglo-American imperialism and his fear of the Soviet Union's growing strength and the fear of revolt among the conquered nations of Europe, entered on the supreme gamble—the assault against the Soviet Union. It is evident that decisive in Hitler's calculations is his confidence of division within the ruling classes of all the other imperialist countries and especially in Britain and the United States. But these calculations are not so easily realized. The British imperialists despite their hatred of the Soviet Union have found themselves compelled—in view of the disastrous situation to which their own policy has brought them after two years of war, in view of the slowness of effective American help, and since they were not ready to surrender the domination of Europe to Hitler—to agree to a temporary collaboration with the USSR.

THE CONSEQUENT CONDITIONS within which this supreme assault of world imperialist reaction against the citadel of socialism takes place, is a tribute to and a powerful indication of the success of the entire preceding policy of the USSR. The armed conflict which has now broken out has long threatened. On this score there have been no illusions. Every proclamation of every leader of the Soviet Union has given warning of it. The strength and diplomacy of the Soviet Union have delayed its outbreak for nearly two decades from the ending of the first interventionist wars. They have delayed its outbreak for eight years from the coming of Hitler to power, during which the strength of the USSR has grown, the crisis of imperialism has deepened, and the forces of the working people have had time to rally. The success of the non-aggression pact of 1939 delayed this outbreak for two years after the launching of the imperialist war in Europe.

The reactionaries all over the world, and not least in Britain and the United States, who have continuously striven since the coming of Hitler to power to promote the Soviet-Nazi conflict as their supreme aim, have obtained their immediate objectives. But they have obtained it under conditions which they did not anticipate. They were not able to achieve their Munich plan. They were not able to achieve the Chamberlain-Daladier plan through the Finnish expedition. They have got their Soviet-Nazi conflict before the world counter-revolutionary front has yet been able to be formed, and the deepening of imperialist antagonisms and the severity of the crisis to which the frenzy of their policies have reduced their own peoples now make its formation more difficult, and when in consequence the people have the greatest opportunity to prevent this formation.

The declaration of collaboration between



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The Week in London

London (by cable).

THE significant highlights in the last few days from the London end are these: Following the dispatch of the British military-economic mission to Moscow and Sir Stafford Cripps' return there, R. H. Potts, president of the National Union of Railwaymen—one of the three most powerful unions in Britain—in a message to the People's Convention supporting their stand for British-Soviet unity, called for the immediate dispatch by the Trades Union Congress of a delegation to Moscow and an invitation to a similar Russian delegation to visit Britain. He declared "Solidarity with our Russian comrades" essential.

Shop stewards of one of the leading aircraft factories in the London area called on Soviet Ambassador Maisky, assuring him of their desire and determination that nothing and nobody be allowed to impede the fullest cooperation of Britain in Russia's fight.

The executive committee of the South Wales Miners Federation passed a resolution declaring: "The influences at work in this country who are hostile to the Soviet Union should be warned that they will not be allowed to impede full cooperation with Russia in bringing about the defeat of Nazism and fascism wherever they may be found."

Meantime, in the streets of London, there were huge demonstrations—by far larger than any held since the outbreak of the war—demanding absolute fulfillment of the pledge of full unity with Russia, and removal of all elements hostile to such unity.

This is the essential background of all diplomatic, military, and economic moves of the past few days. The first popular reaction to the Premier's pledge of full aid to Russia, declares Jack Owen of Manchester, one of the leading trade union militants in northern war industries, was one of grim enthusiasm. "To any suggestion," said Owen in a conversation with your correspondent, "that that pledge might in some way be sabotaged by hostile forces, the reply invariably was 'just let them try.' "

The general reaction at the moment in "political circles" is to confirm the opinion that the Premier's broadcast was in a sense a recognition of the potential strength of such hostile elements here—and perhaps above all in certain British official missions abroad—and the necessity for quickly giving an authoritative line from the present dominant section of the British Cabinet.

It was noted that even after the Premier's broadcast there were some elements in Parliament who seemed quite openly to be making immediate reservations on the subject of unity with Russia. William Hickey, well informed columnist of the *Daily Express,* has drawn sharp attention to the attitude of certain organs of the Catholic press here, which at this very moment are actually conducting a campaign against an alliance with the Soviet Union and—incredible as it may seem—for "counter-revolution" in the Soviet Union.

Equally distasteful and disturbing to many is the fact that certain allied governments in Britain are taking advantage of the Premier's own statement to broadcast to "their own people" exhortations "against Communism." Nobody here considers it necessary or would dream of asking that they should broadcast statements in favor of Communism. But it is felt that at such a moment statements of the present kind can only play into the hands of Hitler by creating divisions among the enslaved peoples and must, it is thought, be acutely embarrassing to the British Foreign Office.

A somewhat uncertain but important indication of the attitude being adopted here in official circles—as distinct from the elements mentioned—is that statements obviously intended to undermine confidence in the Red Army, and the enormous publicity at first given to the German communiques in the British press, have in the last few days tended to fade out of the majority of the newspapers.

The *Economist,* important liberal City organ, in its current issue draws especial attention to the danger of Nazi propaganda making headway among "men of property and men of religion" everywhere, and especially refers to the potentially dangerous effects of such propaganda upon American big businessmen.

CLAUDE COCKBURN.

Great Britain and the Soviet Union opens the way to real and effective collaboration of the two peoples for the defeat of fascism. But there is no room for delusions. The reactionary pro-fascist, anti-Soviet forces in Britain continue powerful and active. For the moment they are careful to hide their faces and there is plenty of fine sentiment expressed in favor of close association. But what concrete steps are being taken? This is the urgent practical question. British Toryism does not so easily change its spots. The reactionaries seek in every way to limit collaboration with the Soviet Union, to leave the Soviet Union to fight alone, while they temporize with missions and similar procedures prepare the way, if a turn in the situation develops, for an agreement with Hitler on the basis of the common fight against the Soviet Union. This determines the present line of fight. In Britain the Communist Party on June 22 issued a declaration for: (1) Immediate military and diplomatic agreement between Britain and the Soviet Union; (2) the removal of all pro-fascist and anti-Soviet reactionaries from places of power in the government, diplomatic services, or military command; (3) the placing of Hess on trial and the publication of all the secret negotiations; (4) a people's government which can be trusted to defend the interest of the people and maintain close alliance with the Soviet Union; (5) a people's victory over fascism and a people's peace; (6) international unity of all working people in the fight for freedom against fascism and reaction.

It is necessary to be prepared for the most rapid changes not only in the situation of the war, but also in the political and international situation. Only the united international front of all peoples in unity with the Soviet Union can secure the most rapid defeat of the forces of fascism. The working class and democratic movement can hold and check the movements of the reactionaries. They can compel the establishment of effective collaboration with the Soviet Union. Such common action seriously undertaken in the military and diplomatic fields can lead to the speedy defeat of fascism and the liberation of the peoples of Europe. These aims can be achieved. But they can only be achieved if the working class organizations fulfill their responsibilities of leadership.

The people of the Soviet Union are fighting for the future interests of humanity. Their cause is the cause of the common people all over the world. We enter this conflict with no underestimation of the seriousness of the issues or the magnitude of the forces which are being let loose by the representatives of barbarism against the cause of the working people and of socialism. But we enter this conflict with complete confidence in the final inevitable victory of the cause of the people and of socialism, whatever vicissitudes through which we may have to pass, and with the determination to do all in our power by every means to hasten that victory.

R. PALME DUTT.

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THE FRONT: A MILITARY ANALYSIS

Colonel T. discusses the first seven days of fighting. The essential characteristics of super-modern warfare. A higher strategy of annihilation and encirclement. The Red Army's realistic communiques.

AT THIS writing, June 30, the first week of the Battle for Humanity is drawing to a close. We soldiers are supposed to view the development of military operations with the calm detachment of professionals "knowing neither wrath, pity, nor fear." But even to us the titanic struggle on the western fringe of the Soviet Union presents a phenomenon whose sheer magnitude is staggering.

Twenty-two hundred miles of front (as the crow flies) . . . well over 6,000,000 men engaged in combat . . . probably more than 20,000 tanks and as many planes hurled against each other in what is but the preliminary stage of the conflict. For this *is* but the preliminary stage. The full mobilization of the Red Army will itself take nine or ten days.

It is impossible to make a coherent analysis of these initial battles without remembering that they are part of the covering operation, the *bataille des frontieres,* designed to permit the completion of the mobilization. In the case of a peaceful state, mobilization can never be complete when the zero hour strikes, because only the aggressor knows the precise hour. But for a coherent analysis it is also necessary to restate the essential characteristics of super-modern warfare.

There are three basic factors of combat: movement, fire, and shock. At times, one factor may be developed at the expense of the others, as was the case with "fire" during the first world war. But the tank and the airplane have combined these factors to a high degree. That is why modern warfare has changed, differing from the operations of a quarter of a century ago, differing also from the wars in Ethiopia, Spain, and China, where modern weapons were used in small quantities, insufficient to change completely the character of the operations.

Super-modern warfare is characterized by:

(1) A tempo which is incomparably faster than the tempo of 1914-18. The Allied offensive in September-November 1918 achieved a speed of less than a mile and a half a day, while a year ago in the Low Countries the Nazis raced to the sea at the rate of twenty-five miles a day.

(2) The strategy of the breakthrough has developed and changed. The old "line strategy" and the "line tactics" with their fronts, wings, flanks, and rear are practically gone. The fight today is conducted by means of columns, or wedges, "daggers" which are driven into the enemy area with the object of breaking up his armies into separate groups, isolating and annihilating them. Every amateur strategist twenty-five years ago used pins and red twine to mark the fronts. Since September 1939 he has had to scribble red arrows along the length of the fronts. This change in the very method of notation reflects the fundamental change in strategy.

(3) Moreover, the airplane has lengthened the range of artillery, so to speak. By carrying explosive shells or bombs hundreds of miles beyond the range of ordinary artillery, the plane makes possible the use of the "third dimension": the air. This further eliminates the continuity of line structure and thereby changes the whole concept of the rear.

The super-modern battle, therefore, instead of presenting a head-on collision of two lines, becomes a running fight between columns or groups. Everything moves and moves fast. Tanks may collide head-on, in which case the battle does not last very long and may be resolved at the first shock. Tanks may fight like battleships on parallel courses or at an angle, making very little difference in which direction the fighting columns move. It is the mutual destruction that counts. Borrowing an image from the prize ring, we may say that Fighter A can knock out Fighter B while pressing him toward A's own corner, or even in that corner.

The modern battle of movement, fire, and shock has therefore reached a higher stage based on the technical progress of the past generation. It brings forward the strategy of encirclement and annihilation, on a higher level than the Cannae tactics of Hannibal, or even the *Cannaebegriff* of von Schlieffen.

Now then, to encircle an army group of the enemy, one must either break through his formations in two or more places and form one or more pairs of pincers; or else, one must let him break through one's own formations at a given point, and then close in from the sides and behind. The former method may be simplified by the presence of insurmountable obstacles, like water, marshes, mountains, or mighty rivers, which may act as one branch of the pincers. In the initial stages the attacker uses the first method, that is, he tries to break through the enemy and form pincers around him; the defender uses the second method, absorbing a breakthrough in order to close in from the sides and behind.

The so-called blitzkrieg is nothing else than a function of the above described means and methods. It is premised on a quick military decision, a KO of the opponent in the first round. It stands to succeed when a powerful "one-round" belligerent takes on an opponent who is technically, numerically, morally inferior. But when a "one-round slugger" meets a fifteen-round fighter with muscle, speed, weight, and wind, the war is bound to develop into a longer-drawn contest. Michael Frunze, one of the Red Army's great strategists and the war commissar until 1925, put it this way:

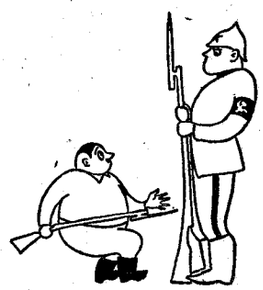
> In a clash of first class opponents, the decision cannot be reached at one blow. The war will assume the character of a long and bitter contest, putting to test all the economic and political foundations of the belligerents. In the language of strategy this means the transition from the strategy of lightning, decisive blows to the strategy of attrition.

The first blow of such a war has just been delivered against the Red Army. Discounting the "astronomical" claims of the German communique of Sunday, June 29, what shall be said of the Nazi achievements after the first week? On the basis of incomplete data, it is clear that the High Command projected a huge pincer movement, striking from east Prussia via Minsk toward the Dnieper River, and from the Lublin salient via Kowel-Luck-Jitomir-Kiev. The object is clearly to encircle the central groups of the Red Army and by concentric pressure to crush them into the great Pripet marshes.

Operations of secondary or diversional character were started from Memel, where the Nazis even in peacetime had established a huge bridgehead across the Niemen River. It was pointed toward Riga via Shavli. Simultaneously local operations were begun to force the Bug River at Brest Litovsk, and by short stabs toward the western fringe of the marshes to cut communications between the Soviet Grodno-Bielostok group and the Kowel-Rovno-Luck group.

The Shavli thrust from Memel was broken up with heavy losses to the Nazis, over 300 tanks. The Minsk thrust is being fought fiercely. Here the thirty-ninth German tank corps was destroyed. The thrust toward Luck has turned out to be the greatest tank battle in history, with the Soviet moto-mechanized divisions fighting the Nazis to a three-day standstill. Whatever its outcome, this thrust will hardly be able to play its role as the southern complement to the northern pincer. Its timing has already been disrupted.

It should be admitted that geographically speaking the Red Army units in the Bielostok and Galician salients are in a very exposed position, but so also are the right flanks of the Nazi drives toward Minsk and Luck



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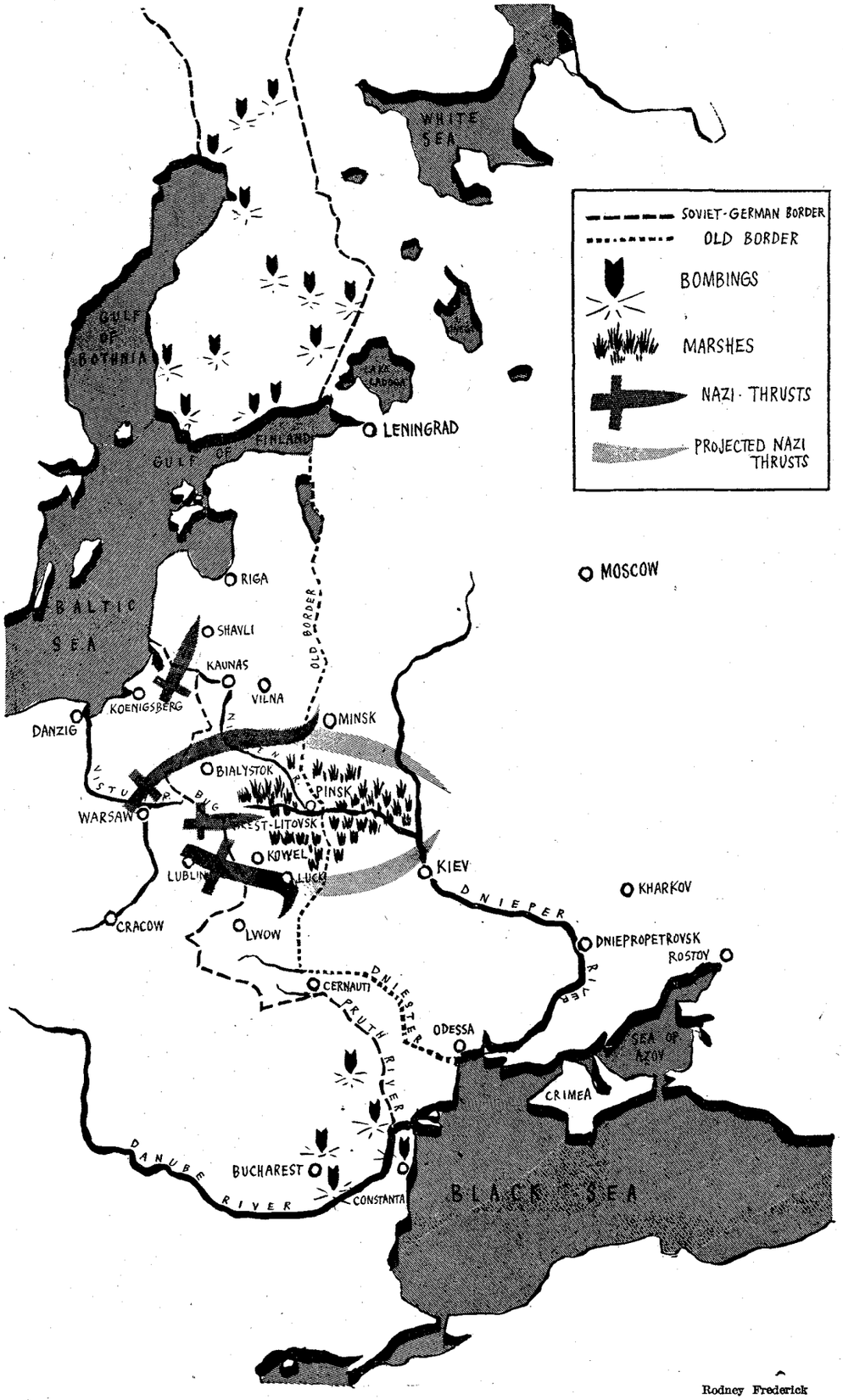

Rodney Frederick

This is a rough copy of the map Colonel T. gave us to accompany his piece. It is naturally a map as of the time of writing, the last day of June. Notice that the southern Nazi thrust around Luck has been seriously blunted, while the actions along the Pruth river and from the Finnish border evidently are as yet of a secondary character, with no Nazi advances recorded. Soviet bombings have been carried out behind the enemy lines in the Rumanian oil fields and in the Finnish munitions, railway centers, and seaports. Actions in the Black Sea and in the Baltic have not been indicated although they are evidently of importance. Late news reports speak of Nazi thrusts beyond Minsk toward Smolensk and Moscow. It remains very much to be seen whether those thrusts will not be cut off from the sides and rear.

which they are respectively threatening. The Soviet groups may have been left exposed for the purpose of retarding the Nazi drives. If they are small units, they may be sacrificed for the sake of larger plans; if they are large units, they may play a counter-offensive part. But all that is speculative.

The main facts are obvious and tremendous:

(1) There have been deep dagger thrusts into the Soviet soil, but there are no pincers. Daggers can be blunted and broken off.

(2) From the very start, the Nazis have encountered the kind of resistance they have never encountered before. The Soviet troops and people are fighting with unparalleled heroism; the sober, authoritative Soviet communiques cite specific examples of personal and collective heroism from frontier guards, pilots, sharpshooters, and collective farmers.

(3) The Nazis are obviously paying heavy prices for their temporary advances. Their claim of having lost only 150 planes as against the Soviet 4,107 is obvious nonsense. It gives itself away when it mentions the precise number of Soviet plane losses because nobody can count to the fourth digit of a number like 4,107. This is really outdoing the Japanese in their fantastic claims at Lake Khassan and Nohomnan.

(4) The Soviet airforce is actively attacking the enemy rear on both flanks, in Finland and Rumania. At the center, it is at present limiting its activity to the protection of centers of mobilization, of course constantly attacking the advancing German columns.

(5) On the left wing of the front, from Galicia to the Black Sea, the Red Army is maintaining its positions on the state border. Enemy efforts to cross the Carpathians and the river Pruth have been repulsed. At several points, viz: at the delta of the Danube, Red Army units have attacked and even established bridgeheads on the Rumanian side. It is interesting that there has been important successful cavalry action against German-Rumanian units.

(6) The border guards, the screen-troops, and the advanced mechanized units have cushioned the first shock between the new border and the old one, thereby permitting the bulk of the armed forces to concentrate at their appointed positions, approximately along the old border. For it should always be remembered that the bulk of the Red Army is just completing its concentrations and has not yet entered the fray in the full force of its manpower and equipment.

THE BLITZKRIEG has therefore not won the first round. That is another way of saying that it is thus far *losing* the first round. Hence the rounds of alcohol being distributed to German soldiers before the attack; the writer well remembers the "trench rum" which the Germans used in the first world war. Hence also all the fairy tales to the accompaniment of Wagnerian music. . . .

COLONEL T.

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TRUTH ABOUT SOVIET TRANSPORT

A powerful railroad system, Stalin once remarked, is as important for a land power as a big navy is for nations dependent upon overseas communication. What the USSR did about it.

IN ONE of its first decrees after the Nazi attack the Supreme Soviet called up some thirteen classes of men in addition to the 5,000,000 or so already in active service. These thirteen classes involve upwards of 13,000,000 Soviet citizens, and they will come, according to the mobilization decree, from as far east as Kuzbass, which is about 3,000 miles from the fighting fronts. Only the central Asian republics and the Far East, along borders which face the flags of friendly nations, have been exempted from the mobilization decree.

The first question which naturally arises is how these millions of Soviet soldiers expect to get to their posts? How will the huge quantities of equipment necessary to arm them be transported? And once arrived, how does the Soviet Union expect to supply them as the war goes on?

These questions raise the familiar problem of Soviet transport, which is supposed to be, according to the "know-it-all experts" of the capitalist world, the weak link in Soviet industrial development. For those friends of the Soviet Union who realize that all contingencies must have been foreseen and provided for in expectation of an imperialist assault on the USSR, the problem is an idle one. And yet it is worth reexamining the real facts about Soviet railroads, motor roads, and waterways—the transport arteries of the socialist commonwealth.

Stalin once remarked that a powerful system of railroads is as essential to the Soviet Union as a first class navy to powers that are dependent on overseas communications. And in every respect, from the assignment of personnel to the expenditure of funds for the expansion of lines and equipment, Soviet transport has received attention comparable to the attention which Great Britain lavishes on her fleet.

The actual line length of the Soviet railroads is only thirty percent of the American line length, even though the figures show an increase of two-thirds since the October Revolution. And the number of freight cars or locomotives is still much below the figures for the United States; nevertheless these are not the important or significant figures. For the Soviet engineers have set themselves the task, not only of expanding their lines as quickly as possible but of using them *more efficiently* than they are used in the capitalist countries. The Soviet railroads are today the most efficient system in the world, and it is efficiency which has made possible industrial expansion and will now register effectively in the war emergency.

What do we mean by efficiency? A few figures tell the story. In 1937, four years ago, the Soviet roads carried 4,160 tons of freight per kilometer of railroad line. In its best year, 1929, the American railroads only carried 1,930 tons of freight per kilometer, while Germany, with its efficient railroad system, carried only 1,524 tons of freight per kilometer.

Does this terrific density of traffic mean a slowing up of service, or wasteful jams in traffic? On the contrary. In the United States the average speed for commercial freight was 25.7 kilometers per hour in 1935. Soviet freight trains were running almost as fast, that is to say 22.5 kilometers per hour, while in the third place comes Britain with an average freight speed of only 15.4 kilometers per hour.

BUT PERHAPS, it may be asked, even if the speed of the freight was right up in second place as compared with the United States, the trains and the lines were nevertheless dangerously overloaded? Soviet engineers evidently don't think so. For they plan to increase their loading to 5,400 tons per kilometer by the end of next year and by 1955—at the end of the fifteen-year plan which is now in preparation—Soviet engineers expect to reach a high point of 6,500 tons per kilometer—*more than six times the present German loading and more than three times the present American loading.*

Such efficiency might be considered commendable in peacetime. The question arises: would that not represent a danger in wartime, when close networks are especially vulnerable to bombardment from the air? But it should be remembered that the Soviet Union is a very big country—one-sixth of the earth—and actually, while traffic is heavy, the lines are far apart. To be exact, the USSR, with only thirty percent of the lineage that we have, is actually traveling forty percent the number of train miles that American freight cars travel: there again is the evidence that the Soviets are using what they have at peak efficiency.

This efficiency is a function of socialist planning, of a rational, calculating use of their rolling stock. Consider, for example, what is known in railroad circles as *useful load per axle.* In the Soviet Union the useful load per axle was 7.8 tons in 1937, as against 6.1 for the United States and 5.8 for Germany in their best years.

And why do Soviet experts emphasize useful load? Because they have found it possible by careful planning between factory and factory, between depots and sources of raw materials to make the maximum use of their freight cars, eliminating waste, unnecessarily long hauls, and such things as far as possible. Even though they have a big country, with factories deep beyond the Urals, they have worked out ways of avoiding a situation where cars go out full and return empty for long distances. Except for the United States and Japan, the number of their cars returning empty is fewer than that of any other nation in the world.

Now a question will arise about the transport situation along the western front, the scene of present operations. And the answer is very favorable to the USSR. It so happens that most of the railroads inherited from the czar were along the western front, precisely where the Soviet armed forces are now standing off the invader. These roads have all been rebuilt, with firmer roadbeds, more closely spaced ties, heavier rails, easier grades, wider curves, and stronger bridges. In addition, the Great Soviet Atlas shows three north-to-south lines, new or double-tracked, running north and south from Leningrad, from Moscow to the Don Basin, intersecting the old lines that run up to the frontier.

Soviet railroads are unique in another respect. Like arrows, they point in one direction only. The Russians work their roads on a wide gauge, and have extended this gauge into the Polish Ukraine, the Baltic republics, and Bessarabia. This is wider than the European roads and therefore German trains and locomotives cannot use them. In case of strategic retreats, therefore, the Soviet engineers have only to withdraw their locomotives and cars and the tracks will become valueless to the Nazis for immediate tactical purposes.

It is possible in this summary only to refer to water transport, which the Soviet Union has greatly developed. A whole network of rivers and canals makes it possible to carry freight to and from all corners of the Union.

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On top of that, it should be remembered that the USSR has been foremost in producing motor trucks, a fact which will be especially important when the time comes for advances deep into enemy territory.

In the year 1938, *the total production of continental Europe in motor trucks was only 120,000,* namely two-thirds of Soviet production. Germany produced 76,000 trucks in that year: the Soviet Union produced almost three times as many, 184,000.

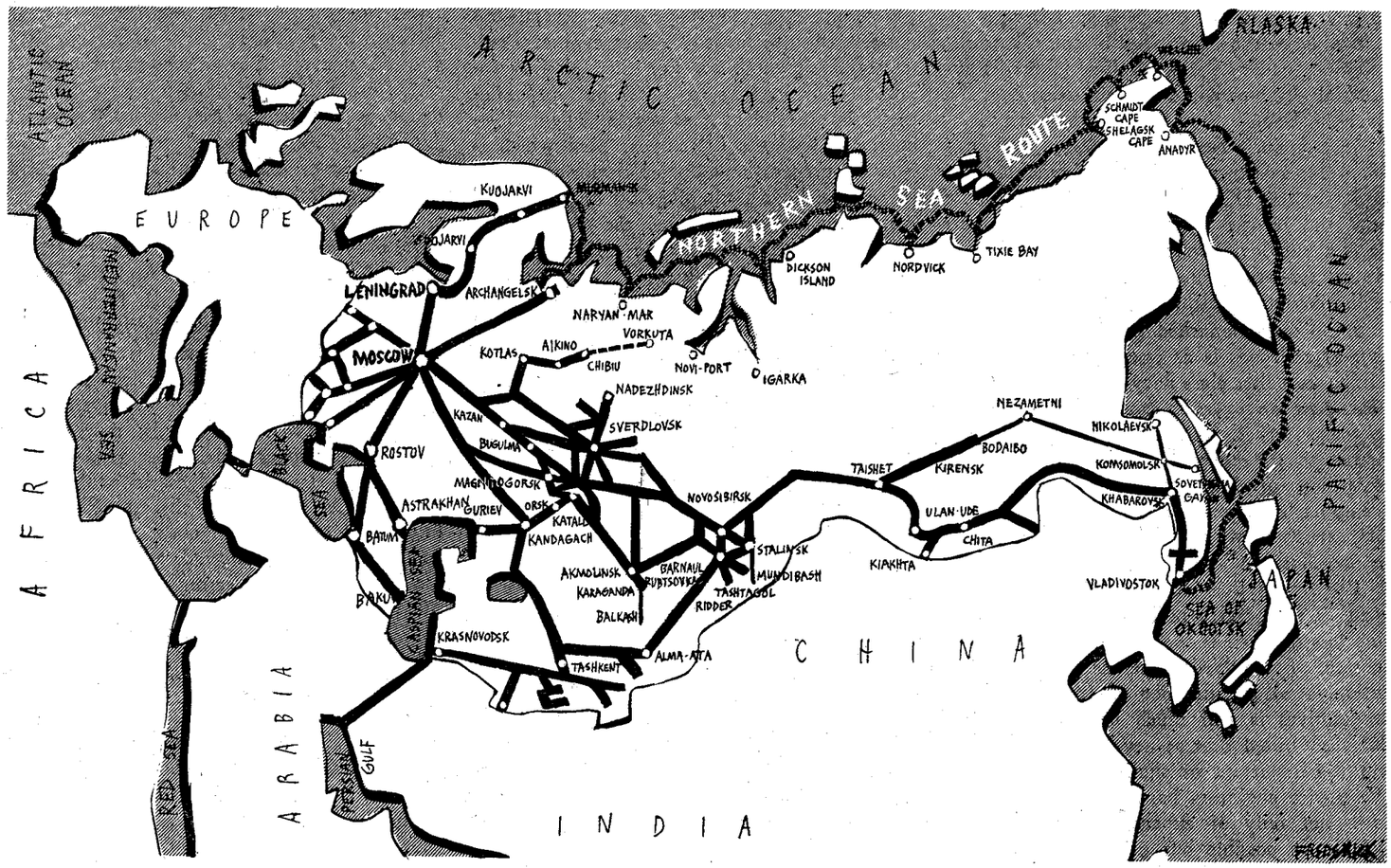
And by way of a final figure it is worth bearing in mind the great advantage of the Soviet transport in the production of tractors, which do not need either rail lines or concrete roads for their locomotion. Tractors are structural embryos of tanks. If we take the year 1936, the last year for which comparative statistics are available, Soviet tractor production was *sixteen times* as large as Germany's —a ratio which must certainly have been maintained in the past five years.

ALL THIS has been the object of special concentration by Soviet planners. One of their best organizers, Lazar Kaganovitch, has long been in charge of railways. Kaganovitch is an old Bolshevik who joined the Kiev organizations of the Party in one of the bitterest years of reaction: 1911. He was one of the Party leaders of the Ukraine all during the twenties, carrying the responsibility for the vast Ukrainian industrial enterprises such as Dnieperstroy. In the thirties he headed the Moscow regional committee of the Party, and was in part responsible for the great Moscow subways which bear his name. After the death of Serge Ordjonikidze he took over the commissariat of heavy industry, and when that job was subdivided six ways, he remained in one of the toughest posts, taking on railway organization on the side.

SO THE SOVIET UNION does not share the worries of foreign experts about Soviet transport, as was demonstrated during the large scale operations in Finland. And the Soviet people will be surprised to learn that people like Walter Lippmann and the editors of the New York *Times* are trying to find excuses for not sending the Soviets economic and material assistance on the grounds that the Soviet transport is "incompetent." The *Times* went so far as to say in a recent editorial that supplies from this country to the Soviet Union might find their way into Nazi hands as a result of Soviet mismanagement. This is a miserable irony when one remembers how many American supplies were lost in France, for example, or in the Netherlands, when the peoples of these countries were betrayed into Nazi hands. It is a double irony when one recalls all the materiel which was shipped to Finland by the American government after campaigns organized by Walter Lippmann and the New York *Times!*

In so far as Soviet transport is concerned, from Vladivostok, or from the mouth of the Caspian Sea, or from the mouth of the Persian Gulf, or from Murmansk, the Soviet people are perfectly competent to take care of American supplies. In fact, unlike many another government which has passed into the limbo of history, the Soviets are capable of making *real and effective* use of American supplies, to the end that Hitler's system will be shattered and swept from the earth.

WILLIAM ABBOTT.



Soviet transport can take care of all the nation's war needs. This map, adapted from the magazine of the American Russian Institute, indicates the development of the main Soviet railroad lines. Many lesser lines running through the big Soviet cities in the western regions of the Soviet Union toward the border are not indicated. In addition, the complex network of waterways, connecting all the big rivers is not shown. American supplies could readily get to the Soviet Union: there are at least three seaports in the Far East exclusive of Vladivostok; there are the Arctic sea-routes toward Murmansk; there is the direct route through the North Atlantic to Murmansk. And there is also the railway which crosses Iran from the Persian Gulf to the tip of the Caspian Sea. This line is approximately 375 miles long and it lies beyond the range of Nazi interference.

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THE APPEASERS TRY AGAIN

The Bourbons in Congress and in the War Department, the Knudsens and the Lindberghs, resist desperately any aid to the Soviet Union. A report from Washington by Adam Lapin.

Washington.

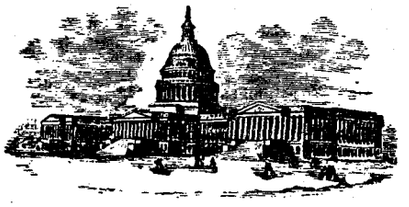
ONE of the leading British diplomats in this country visited the State Department on that hot, sultry Sunday morning following the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. This diplomat, who was once prominent in the appeasement party in Britain, conferred briefly with Sumner Welles. Then he stopped for a few minutes in the State Department corridors to chat with newspapermen. Three hours preceding Churchill's broadcast he indicated that Great Britain would announce support of Soviet resistance to the Nazi armies.

The diplomat continued to muse out loud and off the record about the significance of the Hitler attack. One of the possible reasons for the new onslaught by the Nazi armies, he said, was the growth of Communist activity within Germany. Another angle, he continued, was a possible attempt by Hitler to appeal to certain elements in Great Britain and particularly in the United States for an appeasement truce. Asked if he included the Catholic hierarchy, he nodded affirmatively. He hinted that Hitler meant to include in his appeal a comparatively large reactionary alignment in this country.

As a former apostle of appeasement, it is perhaps not surprising that this official understood so well Hitler's calculations in regard to the appeasement forces in the United States. It is true that as far as popular sentiment is concerned, the Nazi invasion has had little effect in arousing support for Hitler as the leader of a great holy crusade to make Western civilization safe from Communism. On the other hand, it would be an error of the worst kind to underestimate the strong appeasement and anti-Soviet sentiments in both official and business circles.

The reaction of the avowed appeasement forces including Hearst and the leaders of the America First Committee and Senator Wheeler was to be expected. But there has already begun in addition a certain process of differentiation within administration forces. Sen. Walter F. George, the tory poll-taxer who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and who for more than a year has been active in piloting important aid-to-Britain legislation, has within the past few days suddenly begun to swing towards isolationism. It is not impossible that other members of the reactionary Southern group in Congress will take a similar stand now as a result of the new war situation.

A slightly different twist of what is essentially the same attitude is given by those who loudly assert their support for continuing aid to Britain but oppose any aid at all to the Soviet Union. This is the stand of the powerful New York *Times*. This is also the line that has been taken by a respectable number



of the powerful dollar-a-year men in the OPM. William Knudsen himself told a press conference that he believed defense should start at home. This was his answer to the question about aid to the Soviet Union. OPM press relations men tried to soften the impression created by Knudsen's remark, but there is little doubt that he hinted at what was really in the hearts of the OPM dollar-a-year crowd. If it will take the Soviet Union to defeat Hitler, they do not appear quite so anxious any longer to have Hitler defeated.

But most significant of all has been the reaction of the hard-boiled officials in the War Department. The ouster of Colonel Lindbergh and General Johnson was supposed to have been a blow to appeasement tendencies of the armed forces. Actually, however, appeasement and anti-Soviet trends have long been strong in the War Department. It has long been a favorite pastime for War Department officials to give interviews for publication (the source not to be mentioned) poohpoohing the strength of the Red Army. They have not stopped this familiar little practice.

It will be recalled that there were two great outbursts of Washington stories in the press, predicting a complete Hitler victory within thirty or sixty days. The first story appeared in Tuesday morning's newspapers, the second in Friday editions. Keen readers may have noticed that these stories bore striking similarities. The fact of the matter is that both stories were inspired at off-the-record press conferences by extremely important and influential War Department officials. Why did they do it? Even if one assumes that these officials simply expressed what they really thought of the Red Army, the question is still not answered. The Army boys have been noted for their discretion. In regard to the Nazi campaign against Britain, they have alternately exuded optimism and pessimism in line with the necessity for pepping up morale in this country. Their predictions have been guided by political considerations.

There is no reason to believe that this is not the case today. As a matter of fact, correspondents came away from these conferences with the War Department officials convinced that they were in effect trying to reassure reactionary appeasement forces that they have little to fear from President Roosevelt's promises of aid to the Soviet Union.

President Roosevelt and Acting Secretary of State Welles have so far confined their discussion of the Soviet-Nazi war to matters of policy. In this respect they have been reasonably clear. They have said the Soviet Union is resisting Nazi aggression, and hence should be aided by the United States. They have also taken some preliminary steps clearing away the impediments to American aid. The administration has lifted the restrictions on Soviet credits in this country, and has refused to invoke the Neutrality Act which would have cut off virtually all American trade with the Soviet Union. The question that still remains unanswered is: what further is the administration going to do?

Sen. Harry Truman of Missouri may not be a great statesman, but he has long been close to administration circles and has frequently reflected what his political superiors are thinking. Immediately after the Nazi attack, Truman said half jocularly and half seriously that the Soviet Union should be aided as long as it is losing and that Germany should be aided if it should begin to lose. If that reflects the thinking in some administration circles, it is not a pretty picture.

THE OLD Munich psychology has certainly not vanished from the Washington scene. Not only War Department spokesmen, but other administration officials as well, have circulated reports that there is little in terms of actual aid which the United States can do for the Soviet Union. And in the meantime the most immediate and elementary questions of aid to the Soviet Union have not yet been determined. Soviet efforts to purchase machine tools here, as well as other types of machinery, have long been sabotaged by certain elements in the State Department. Will it now be possible for the Soviet Union to make necessary purchases here? Unfortunately most of the semi-official whispers indicate that not much can be expected.

It is true that the administration runs the risk of alienating a few reactionary and business groups if it furnishes tangible aid to the Soviet Union. To refuse to render such aid, however, would lead progressives to think that the administration has missed its greatest opportunity to defeat Hitlerism, that because of anti-Soviet bias it was ready to risk a Hitler-dominated world. Within the next few days the President will undoubtedly have to decide whether or not he will fulfill his pledge to aid the Soviet Union. That decision is perhaps the most important he has ever made. *Its outcome may largely be determined by what he reads in his mail in the next few days and by what his public opinion scouts throughout the country report.*

ADAM LAPIN.

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LEARN FROM THIS TEACHER

And what was the crime they found Morris Schappes guilty of? A man who would not lie. A report by Bruce Minton.

EACH day we hear of the heroism of sailors on dreadnaughts and merchant ships, of soldiers fighting desperately to defend their homeland, of women in the rear rescuing the wounded from the debris of smashed buildings. These heroes are recognized and honored. Last week I sat in the dusty heat of a New York City courtroom and watched another hero, no less courageous than those who risk death. But he was certainly without glorious mention in the press. Instead, because he refused to take the easy way, refused to lie when he was ordered to lie, he was held up to ridicule and calumny. He faced long imprisonment, his fruitful academic career—for which he had sacrificed so much—choked off. And for his refusal to play the corrupt game, he could expect only the intangible reward that comes from the proud knowledge that he had preserved his own high integrity.

The heroism of Morris U. Schappes, teacher of English at the City College of New York, is deep and glowing and profound. I have known Morris Schappes for a long time. I have always liked him, always considered him a person of exceptional qualities. We at NEW MASSES admired Schappes, the way he watched the magazine so closely, the way he wrote us whenever we slurred a significant point, or worded a sentence sloppily so that its meaning was not completely clear. I remember speaking to a little group at a summer camp on the growth of the CIO and being extremely conscious of Schappes in the audience; I knew I had better be precise in what I said or Morris would get up later and quietly, impersonally, modestly set things in order as they should be. He was such a stickler for exactness, for clarity. And yet he always dropped us a note of appreciation when we did something particularly well. He was ever willing to give us a hand.

We had taken Schappes pretty much for granted. A fine fellow. A pleasant companion. A good union man. It was odd to sit in a courtroom and see him unchanged, with his owlish glasses, his mop of reddish curling hair combed back from his forehead, his good-natured, bland expression—to see him unchanged and to realize that he was on trial and faced with a twenty-year sentence and a $20,000 fine. He was always such an unassuming person, going about his work with little fuss. And now he was the prisoner at the bar, and the whole state apparatus was grinding relentlessly to destroy his life, and malevolent little men were libeling him in open court, and he was pictured in the papers as a cunning plotter with nefarious schemes, enough to make the average reader shudder. Here was Sol Gelb, prosecutor for District Attorney Dewey's office, the man who slandered and smeared the fur union leaders, thundering about the "villainy" of the Morris Schappes we knew as a mild, industrious charming fellow whom it was nice to run into of an evening. Here was a berobed little man, notorious for his anti-Red stump speeches, who had refused to disqualify himself as prejudiced on defense counsel's request, sitting in judgment on a friend of ours. Here were twelve blank-faced people with no means of understanding what Schappes worked for and stood for, trying to get straight "evidence" that was so confusing, sitting wearily in the heat day after day and wishing they could dispose of this matter and get back to their homes and to their daily routines. Here were the men whose profession it is to find a scapegoat, to build on the foundation of another's tragedy fine records as guardians of "law and order," to use the misery of others for their own advancement, seeing it as opportunity to add more dollars to their weekly pay checks, and to earn a slap on the back from those who count and who can say a good word for a fellow in the proper places. The spectacle was unreal, like a grade-B movie. But the ending of the fusty, badly conceived drama violated all precedent. The hero was not vindicated at the last moment. The twelve bored men and women filed out of the courtroom with the judge's instructions ringing in their ears and, realizing what was expected of them, filed back again with a verdict of guilty on four counts.

Guilty of what? What fearful crime had Schappes committed to face twenty years' imprisonment and a fine as far beyond his ability to pay as an order to fly to the moon would be beyond his ability to perform? Terrible indeed his guilt must be to merit such bitter punishment.

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES was convicted of perjury in the first degree. He was accused of lying at the Rapp-Coudert hearing held to investigate the Teachers Union at City College. His monstrous offense is set forth in the four-point indictment for all to see.

It was charged that this Morris Schappes (1) testified that the Communist unit at City College never contained more than four members, though the Rapp-Coudert committee alleged that fifty or more belonged to it;

(2) declared that after February 1938, he was the only editor of *The Teacher Worker*, whereas the committee insisted that about ten persons took part in the publication of this paper;

(3) informed the Rapp-Coudert committee that he did not know of any other Communist besides himself who belonged to the Teachers Union in the college, though the committee said this information was false;

(4) held that there were no Communist Party fractions in the union, though the committee contended this was untrue.

Consider these charges carefully. They were presented as sufficient excuse to keep a man behind bars for twenty years. Because of them, Morris Schappes, now thirty-four years old, is threatened with removal from life until he is fifty-four—or even beyond that time, if he must pay off the immense fine. Had Schappes held up a bank, brandishing a sub-machine gun at the teller, had he made off with $500,000 and, when apprehended, had he refused to name his accomplices, then he could have been sentenced to serve a maximum of ten years' imprisonment—and no fine. When he was released, he would expect to get his share of the swag. But Morris Schappes did not hold up a bank; yet his alleged crime may be punished twice as severely.

When the witch hunt against progressive teachers started in CCNY, the Rapp-Coudert committee had to "justify" its attack on the educational system of the state. It needed some excuse for the "retrenchment" program, which closed Townsend Harris High School, cancelled the jobs of 1,400 substitute teachers, published findings that there were far too many teachers being employed.

It also needed to break the resistance to retrenchment by smashing the Teachers Union. So the committee searched for "Communists"; these so-called subversive forces were supposedly filling school posts and running the union with orders from Moscow. They could be discharged and the budget for education reduced by claiming that teachers who were to be dropped because of lack of funds were dangerous people, and that much of the former budget for education had been spent on Red "inessentials" such as too many books and too much laboratory equipment. The need was to put the finger on some Reds to get the hunt off to a good start.

MORRIS SCHAPPES was called for questioning. He admitted readily that he had been a member of the Communist Party from 1936 to 1939, at which time he resigned to find time to write a book. For joining this legal party, the authorities at CCNY suspended him from his college position, though at the time of his suspension he was no longer a member and had not been for two years. For its part, the Rapp-Coudert committee declared that it had knowledge of all sorts of horrendous "Communist" activities at CCNY and demanded that Schappes corroborate its fantasies. He was ordered to give the names of "Communist" colleagues so that these teachers could be dismissed and cut off from their livelihood. Schappes replied that he was

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acquainted with only four members of the college staff who had been members of the Communist Party—none of whom was teaching in the college at the time Schappes testified. He denied the tale that there had been fifty or more Communists at CCNY. He alone had edited and published the *Teacher Worker* after February 1938—not a surprising feat since it was a small, four-page monthly paper which would hardly take the energies of ten people as the committee claimed. He refused the suggestion that he submit spurious information so that the committee could more easily smash the Teachers Union.

As Edward Kuntz, defense attorney, pointed out, there was no reasonable evidence or reasonable presumption that Schappes had not told the exact truth. Schappes denied the charges. He stated frankly that he certainly would not act as an informer, but he also pointed out that he could not possibly give information not known to him. Instead of being a perjurer, he was being commanded to perjure himself so that the innocent could be hounded out of jobs, so that the Rapp-Coudert committee could boast the uncovering of a deep-dyed, non-existent plot. If anyone doubts the exactitude of Schappes' stand, let him examine the court record. The distinguished philosopher, Morris Raphael Cohen of CCNY, told the court of his personal knowledge of Schappes' integrity and high character. The prosecution dared not challenge Dr. Cohen. It relied instead on a group of professional informers to offset the defense. Its case rested primarily on information elicited from one William Canning. This gentleman was caught in one statement after another giving the lie to former remarks he had made under oath. He presented a fantastic story, naming scores of City College teachers who were "Communists." Canning's intimate "knowledge" came from the fact that he claimed to have been a Communist Party member himself. The defense proved that he was an impostor. The defense proved that other prosecution witnesses, cringing men and women desperately holding on to jobs, willing, unlike Schappes, to sing any song at the expense of anybody else so long as their own bread and butter was not taken from them, were telling the stories demanded of them. To be blunt, Schappes was convicted by stoolpigeons. This is of course nothing new in trade union history. How many times unionists have been persecuted by "evidence" of hired informers whose job it is to lie and betray!

ON THE FOURTH FLOOR of the Criminal Courts Building the ugly trial played itself out over a period of two weeks. The judge seemed uncomfortably aware of what was happening. That would account for his irritability, his petulant hostility to the defense. He continually struck attitudes of solemn self-righteousness, striding into the court with his black robes swirling about him, with the hurried intenseness of a man who wants people to say, "Ah, such a purposeful dignitary *must*, before all, be above the suspicion of reproach." And as Judge Jonah Goldstein sat upright in his great chair on the dais, his shrewd, too-prominent eyes just above the level of the desk, he personified the self-righteous man who in his own opinion can never be unfair, and who therefore was justified when he interrupted the prosecutor whenever Sol Gelb seemed likely not to get the maximum of slander from a witness. The jury, too, was carefully selected. Every member admitted prejudice against Communism, the Communist Party, and all Communists individually, before he was admitted to the panel. Two talesmen who denied preconceived dislike of the political party which Schappes had once joined, were immediately dismissed. The prosecutor did not want men and women sitting on the case whose minds were not made up. He played with a stacked deck, as defense attorney Kuntz pointed out. Everything was in his favor. And whenever the defense attempted to show the case in its true light, the prosecutor roared objections which Judge Goldstein invariably sustained. Whenever Kuntz spoke, the judge sniped at him, his voice impatient and querulous; it is questionable if his attitude was lost on the jury.

It was a disgusting business, drab and hypocritical and essentially dishonest. Life was turned upside down, with the liar Canning transformed into an honest man, and everything that was honorable, everything for which Schappes stood, labeled false and reprehensible. The conviction could have been handed down before the trial started—there was no question of doing more in the court than reinforcing prejudices and airing misconceptions and falsehoods. The two weeks' exhibition was an ugly ritual, gone through because it was required.

Schappes will appeal. He has every moral claim for a reversal of the infamous decision handed down by the lower court. It is now up to the people who loathe crass pretense to see to it that Schappes is tried on the real merit of his case. This young man has put the trade union movement above his own freedom. He has put integrity above his right to enjoy all the things he wants—a home, the love of his wife, the right to have children, the right to study and to teach and to learn, the right to participate in life for which he has such a jealous passion.

The heroism of Morris Schappes is a challenge. He has displayed the courage that every man and woman hopes he will be strong enough to command if he is put to the test. It is the steady, patient bravery even more demanding than the emotional daring called for in the heat of struggle. His is a deeper kind of courage, the kind one describes quietly and seriously to one's child to show the true nobility of man. This is not a plea for Morris Schappes. This is a flat statement of what he has done, for which he has asked nothing. Letters should flow to Judge Jonah Goldstein at General Sessions Court, New York City, demanding Schappes' immediate release on bail pending sentence, and the imposition of a suspended sentence by the judge. Schappes must be saved from years in the penitentiary. The simple fact is that it is now up to each one of us to save him. BRUCE MINTON.

"And now Mrs. Astorbilt will report on the Nutrition Conference."

News from Nowhere

WHAT became of Sweden's Middle Way? Answer: that's the route Hitler's troops are taking across Sweden.

★

The journalistic ouija boards say Russia has 6,000,000 troops. This includes 1,000,000 Red soldiers newly defrosted after the American press froze them solid in 1939.

★

Hitler has asked each country sympathetic to his "New Europe" to send "token" forces to fight Communism. Petain is sending a starving baby.

★

Nazi soldier-photographers have won the war already. Now if only the infantry will catch up with them.

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MONOGRAPH 26

The story of monopoly's high pressure lobbies in Washington as told by the TNEC. How the National Association of Manufacturers works it. By Barbara Giles.

A GOVERNMENT report is a remarkable piece of literature. I am referring to the findings of the TNEC—specifically, Monograph 26, on lobbying and other political pressures. This report proves that democracy is throttled when a nation's means of production are in the hands of the few. It proves this but does not *say* it. All the TNEC says—without surprise or indignation—is that 250 corporations have won control of the government, and plain citizens can't expect to buck $60,000,000,000. In a way this is the most cynical picture of democracy that's been drawn since the old-time cartoonists used to depict lobbyists throwing wads of currency through congressional transoms, with notes saying simply "Vote my way." For the authors of Monograph 26 can't see any way out. But let's consider their findings before we talk about solutions. The evidence offered in these 196 pages of close print is valuable enough to be examined before it's buried or burned.

There are lobbies and lobbies. One kind usually operates from small, obscure quarters, with immense diligence and little money. It makes no secret of its activities. Rather, it advertises them, proudly anouncing, for example, that its representatives have visited such-and-such congressmen and urged them to vote in a certain way—for labor's rights, perhaps, or consumer benefits or civil liberties. The other kind occupies a good deal of expensive hotel space and is also diligent but self-effacing. Its agents are not familiar to the public although the congressmen they "contact" often know them by their first names. Good people were scandalized when Joe Grundy, king of the tariff lobby, was appointed to fill a Senate vacancy in 1930 but hard-boiled Washington observers said "Why not? It's where he's been all along." Cherubic Joe with the small-boy grin had for a year been living in congressmen's laps helping them build the Hawley-Smoot tariff bill to the sky. Why shouldn't he function openly, in pleasant surroundings, among friends? Congress was full of Grundys anyway, one more wouldn't hurt. As Monograph 26 points out, senators and representatives are mostly businessmen or lawyers who "share the business viewpoint." And to these men, Mr. Grundy's viewpoint was particularly refreshing. They had been pushed and hauled around by a hundred tariff lobbies—steel, oil, lumber, etc.—with separate claims. Smiling Joe's program on tariffs was simple: raise them all. He spoke for big business as a whole, which turned a "farm relief" tariff bill into a law that slapped prohibitive duties on practically every manufactured product except carillon bells.

Mr. Grundy, in short, represented *the* big business lobby. For there is really only one. Call its component parts what you like—Edison Electric Institute, American Bar Association, or any other name—it's all the same thing. Despite their minor conflicts, they add up one program, one group. They are the few thousand men represented in the National Association of Manufacturers and the US Chamber of Commerce. Indeed, as Monograph 26 makes plain, this united front actually does not represent even a few thousand men but 250 corporations. As TNEC puts it:

> . . . the extent of interlocking in the directorates of the country's leading business units is so great as to result inevitably in a considerable similarity of viewpoint. In 1935, out of 250 corporations (the 200 largest non-financial and the fifty largest financial), 151 companies were interlocked with at least three other companies in the group. . . . Other pressure groups possess the political cohesiveness and single-mindedness of business, but they have not the economic cohesion, in the sense that businessmen all over the country are relatively easy to unite in a single movement.

Not wealth alone, then, but its *centralized control* lightens the daily business of lobbying by monopoly. With its unity, single-mindedness, and the pooling of corporate treasuries, monopoly can move swiftly, shifting from one battleground to another. If it loses a "cause" in the House and Senate, it puts pressure on administrative agencies. If that fails, it goes into the courts. In all cases, with few exceptions, it battles with men whose own convictions make them a pushover for monopoly pressure but who are sometimes restrained by other considerations from fully acting on their beliefs. For personal pressure alone is not enough. The honorable gentleman from California may be happy to hear what the "statistician" of Edison Electric Institute has to say about mean utility regulations, but he can never forget next year's election. Suppose his constituents don't believe that high electric rates are a symbol of American freedom? Maybe he himself has some doubts about that—there are even a few honorable gentlemen who are too honorable to listen to Edison Electric. At any rate it is the people who must be pressured ("educated") along with the congressmen but more intensely. And here is where the really interesting part of Monograph 26 begins.

PROPAGANDA by big business is both impudent and exceedingly subtle. It is impudent in its falsehoods, subtle in concealing its source. The latter is made possible by the facts of monopolist life—and the myths. Most helpful of all is the "uncontrolled press" myth. In 1923 the utilities spent about $30,000,000 in advertising and at one time financed ten newspapers. This is going pretty far for a single pressure-group, which can usually do its journalistic educating without so much expense. As a rule, all big business has to do is mail the editor a pamphlet of helpful information. For, as TNEC points out, the press and radio are themselves big business and therefore (says Monograph 26 politely) "the prisoners of their own convictions." So with the movies, with all scientific devices for reaching masses of people. Science itself is the servant of the big pressure boys. On this point the monograph deserves quoting:

> As media of propaganda, of information, and of opinion formation, the talking picture and the radio are now recognized as new and permanent factors in the political equation. As such, they take their places alongside the newspaper press. . . . Similarly, air transport and the automobiles are now recognized together with the railroad as means of transportation, affecting profoundly, perhaps essentially, both the substance and form of government authority. Politically such inventions as the telephone, telegraph, radio, air transport, the automobile, etc., have been overemphasized in relation to the art of invention. They are merely particular examples of an art which is on its way to perfection. And effective domination of this greatest of all modern scientific achievements is in the hands of business. The controls centralized in the business community extend to both pure and applied science. It is the domination in both fields which gives business its key position. No other group, not even government, controls and enjoys this asset to the same extent. It is a resource of the first magnitude, endowing business with unique influence in the social process, and making its political strength almost unassailable.

Another "free" institution which has been of use to monopoly is public education. Since this can't be owned outright, it must be influenced—by the usual pressures or by a judicious distribution of cash. The power trust showed how to do it. Proceeding on the theory that teaching was a "starveling profession," utility companies invited poor professors to "study and consult" with them for, say, $200 a year in addition to their ordinary salaries. By way of thanks the professors suggested new courses, research scholarships, and textbooks that would woo the young mind away from any notion that Samuel Insull needed watching. "In numerous cases," states Monograph 26, "thousands of pamphlets presenting the utility point of view were introduced . . . into public schools." (Imagine Rapp-Coudert investigating *that*.) At its conventions the National Association of Manufacturers boasts of pouring propaganda into the schools and

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"interviewing" teachers. But only at its conventions; publicly, the NAM's ideas must seem to reach students through the spontaneous thinking of their teachers. To deodorize such ideas of cash taint, hide their origin, is the essential of business propaganda.

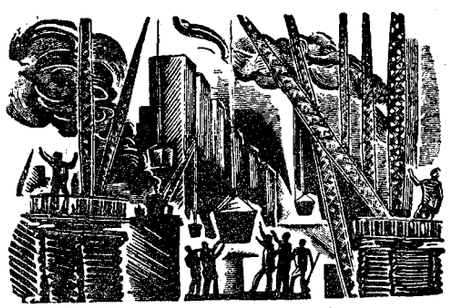
Very often no cash transaction is necessary. Industry maintains a virtuous front of "research men," "public speakers," and "experts" who will, at the drop of a hat, tell you anything you don't know about the beauties of the profit system. They are available twenty-four hours a day for speaking engagements before women's clubs, forums, and other citizen groups. They will also visit you, if you are important enough, for a *tete a tete* on "free enterprise" and the need for keeping labor in its place. In dealing directly with Congress and executive agencies, industry usually reveals its face, but not always. Here, too, puppets may be more useful. "Plain citizens," with an astonishing knowledge of high finance, turn up at hearings on big business legislation. A bill sponsored by landlords elicits the enthusiasm of a "dirt farmer." Obscure companies test the constitutionality of a law regulating big business practices. Throughout these farces everybody, especially the bigtime editorial writers, keeps a perfectly straight face; no winks or smiles are permitted in the solemn business of identifying industry with "the people."

I WISH the TNEC had done more than mention one of the prime reasons for the success of business propaganda: the fertile ground of monopoly culture. How many young minds are not already conditioned to the "American way" of the National Association of Manufacturers long before its agents begin to censor textbooks? As often as not the textbook authors themselves, without even knowing it, obey the hidden censorship of their society. No one from the Bankers Association has to tell most publicists and educators what the correct line is on "sound money." Moral and political cliches in support of monopoly rule were woven into the pattern of social thinking before monopoly itself was born—before the Constitution was written. You may sneer when a Chamber of Commerce leaflet speaks excitedly of "individual liberty" as against "bureaucracy"—but the old chestnut is not so harmless when it comes from men who write "objective" surveys or even novels and scenarios, who mount "non-political" platforms and sometimes speak from pulpits. But really to investigate the complex, subtle ramifications of this psychological network would require a separate staff of researchers; the TNEC probably had as much as it could attend to with tangible forms of propaganda.

Nor does Monograph 26 answer fully another interesting question: why, since the ground is so fertile, the propaganda channels so controlled, and the resources so immense—why does monopoly have to work so hard at this pressure business? For work hard it does. Its lobbies go day and night, the mimeograph machines turn endlessly, and courts are cluttered with business-inspired litigation. The NAM's pressure program is so enormous and efficient that even in 1913 it "excited the admiration of the majority of the House committee" that investigated its lobbying activities. As for the power trust, TNEC quotes the Federal Trade Commission on that famous utility drive against government regulation in the twenties: "No campaign approaching it in magnitude has ever been conducted except possibly by governments in wartime." (Incidentally, propaganda expenses are included in the "cost of doing business" and are deducted before figuring net income—relieving monopoly of some taxes and dividend payments.)

Most of this pressure activity revolves around "the principle of the thing." A corporation would far rather spend a million dollars to fight the Wagner Labor Relations Act than pay a workmen one dollar more per week. The drug lobby will invest thousands to contest pure-drug regulations rather than miss a single sale of eyelash lotion guaranteed to burn the eyes out. In other words, according to Monograph 26, "The purpose is not solely profit, but includes the exercise of control *per se,* as an attribute of ownership." Within the past decade this "exercise of control" has become the ruling passion of monopoly. Its lobbies work so hard because it is forever jittery about a threat to its power. But a threat from what direction? From the government, say the authors of Monograph 26. And it is on this point, I think, that the TNEC misses the significance of its own findings and falls into cynicism.

FOR "THE GOVERNMENT," as Monograph 26 uses the term, is a creature of confused personalities. At one time it is an umpire in the struggle for power. From this it becomes an enemy of big business, since the latter is too strong to be umpired and must be attacked. But then again, according to TNEC's own testimony, the government is often an ally of big business—or at least it is pressed into surrendering in the unequal contest. Much confusion arises because TNEC itself seems to be expressing some business propaganda. At least it fails to point out that denouncing "the government" as a lot of Meddlesome Matties and downright Bolsheviks who want to strangle Free Enterprise is really industry's way of railing at the people. For when does "government" ever move against the lords of creation except when the people force it to? Monograph 26 shows this even in its relatively brief and rather routine discussion of people's lobbies. And the monograph's first sentence does not depict the government as either umpire or fighter. "The American people," say the authors, "are confronted with the problem of who shall control the government. . . ." Here the government is the prize in the contest—fought over by big business and the people.



Maybe the authors should take a harder look at those people. It might have given them something besides rhetoric to put in their last paragraph, which calls for "social and political genius" to adapt "an eighteenth century political system to a twentieth century economic system." There's the germ of an idea here but it could also be used by the fascist "New Order" disciples. I still say that TNEC members are cynics. It's cynical to offer vague idealism when the facts are hard to face. And the facts, as Monograph 26 makes plain, are that monopoly is vigorously trying to control the government now as never before and will permit no "adaptation" that doesn't suit itself. The authors describe this:

> Speaking bluntly, the Government and the public are "over a barrel" when it comes to dealing with business in time of war or other crisis. Business refuses to work, except on terms which it dictates. It controls the natural resources, the liquid assets, the strategic position in the country's economic structure, and its technical equipment and knowledge of processes. The experience of the World War, now apparently being repeated, indicates that business will use this control only if it is "paid properly." In effect, this is blackmail, not too fully disguised.

Notice that "the government" is classed with the public as a victim of monopoly's fascist program. Yet, in preceding pages, Monograph 26 tells how the government frequently coddles these industries. And on page 23 it describes how government often strengthens big business, handing over to it the fruits of scientific research. "By aiding business in this way," says the report, "government fortifies one of the greatest forces possessed by business in the struggle for power." Among those especially fortified are the steel and iron industry and automobile manufacturing, where "government efforts to improve labor conditions have been persistently rebuffed." *Government* efforts? Only so far as pressure from labor moved government to act in behalf of labor's lights. TNEC naturally does not see very far on this aspect of political control, and therefore does not come to other conclusions about "the public." The public, which means the people, cannot be dismissed as an "amorphous" and "gullible" mass. Its various pressure forces also add up to one program, one group. With organized labor as its center, this group widens and grows in strength and unity. It means a great deal that monopoly's lobby has for the past several years directed its fiercest fire against the union hall. Only the "people's lobby," that crystallizing, growing group around organized labor, challenges monopoly control.

BARBARA GILES.

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MEET THE SOCIAL WORKERS

Some 10,000 of them are CIO members. The reasons why. "They are not responsible for niggardly relief allowances." The reason for dissatisfaction.

AN ASSIGNMENT given is not necessarily an assignment accepted, and there are definite indications that America's social workers are being a little recalcitrant these days about taking on a certain kind of morale job that is popular with tories in Washington. Whereby hangs a tale, one which takes us to Atlantic City for the Sixty-Eighth National Conference of Social Work.

But before walking along the board walk into Convention Hall, perhaps a bit of background is in order. The scientific and social significance of social work has been developing so rapidly in recent years that many socially minded people outside the field are not completely aware of its implications.

(1) The present decade has produced a marked trend in the direction of sloughing off the *noblesse oblige,* sympathy-charity connotations of social work, and ushering in a new phenomenon; social work as a science. A good, thick book could be written on this subject, but suffice it to say here that, principally from sociology and psychiatry, most social workers have come to regard themselves as something less than fairy godmothers. They have begun to apply scientific disciplines in meeting the inner emotional, and the outer social, necessities of those in need of such service. It just isn't good social work any longer to look down upon the "client" as a "recipient of charity." There is a good deal more tendency to examine the immediate economic and personal difficulties of the individual and to use whatever resources are available to help him get going again.

The science of picking up the pieces of a decadent order, you may say. Well, maybe. But there are an awful lot of human pieces left lying about unemployed, bruised, confused, sometimes hopeless, by the system of which we are a part. There's nothing progressive about just leaving them in the mud. The job of the moment is to help them realize what's happened to them, to get them vertical again, so to speak. There are scientific, unscientific, and demoralizing ways of doing this and (here as elsewhere) what is scientific is progressive.

(2) Coincident upon this tendency has been an exodus from social work of the unlovable character known variously as Creeping Carry, Nosey Nelly, or Pantry Snooper. Definitely past is the day when social work was run by volunteer debutantes or emotionally deprived spinsters of "the upper classes" (who, often enough, were doing nothing more significant than putting inadequate bandages on the industrial and social wounds caused by their male kin, the employing barons). A good proportion of social workers in this period come from actual working class homes. Nearly all the rest are from garden variety white collar families.

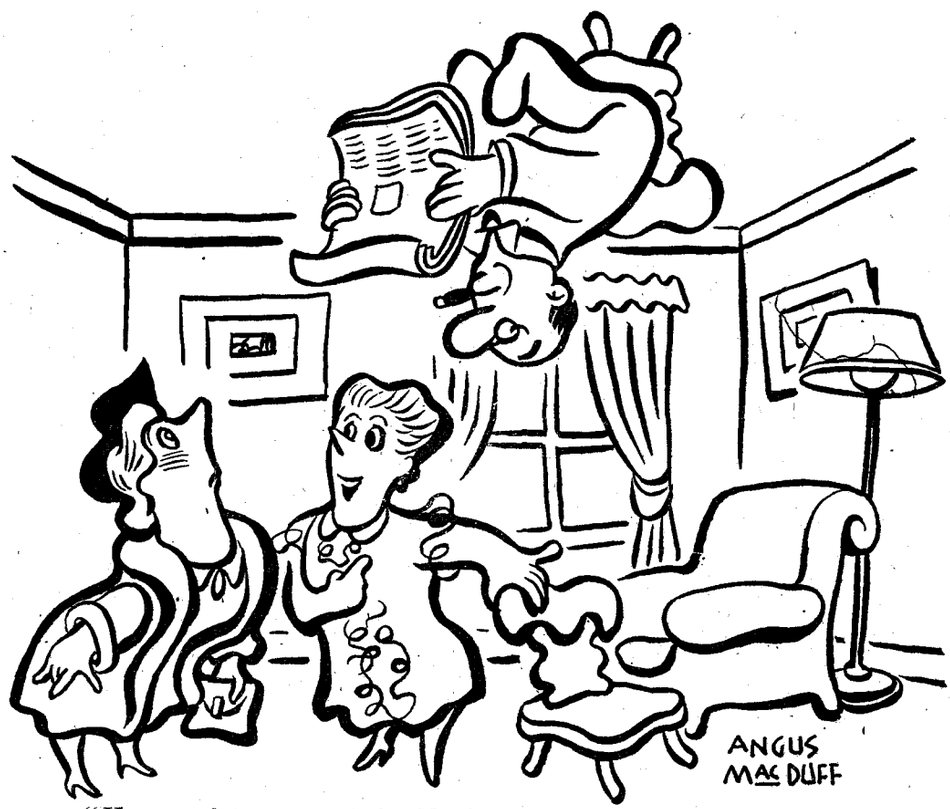
(3) An undreamed development a decade ago, today about 10,000 practicing social workers (in the field of public relief and in that of community chest agencies) are CIO members through the Social Service Employees Union, one of the divisions of the United Office and Professional Workers of America, and the State, County and Municipal Workers of America. Beginning in the early depression years in the form of discussion groups and independent protective societies, this trade union movement in social work took definite form in 1936, when several thousand organized social workers entered the AFL. With the launching of the CIO, these workers felt that both their personal security and the objectives of their profession would be more effectively advanced in the new progressive industrial union movement.

Since that time vigorous, and at times militant, fights have been waged by both unions around protective issues, and also around the advancement of the social services. Under the current assault upon all public welfare programs, both unions have recently shown themselves capable of dealing telling blows in defense of their members and of the men, women, and children who receive, and sorely need, their services.

(4) With ever increasing clarity, most social workers understand the forces in the midst of which they work. They realize that, from the standpoint of the dominant minority in our society, their role is to administer a social deficit in such a way as to dull the edge of mass protest; or, from that of the most "forward-looking" of the industrial leaders, to be the labor service in a "social service state" which would pump out just enough purchasing power to keep the wheels of industry going profitably under an increasingly regimented economy.

In justice to modern social workers, it must be pointed out repeatedly that they are not responsible for the niggardly relief allowances and service facilities they administer. They work for wages under definitely established limitations, and are about as responsible for the adequacy of the allowances and the services as is a bus conductor for the vintage of the contraption he guides around the public streets. In justice to them, it should be understood that, particularly through their trade union movement, they have played an increasingly articulate role in demanding of legislative bodies that these allowances and services be made more adequate.

This social realization on the part of social workers themselves is, I believe, of tremendous significance. Many social workers are coming to understand which side is up in our social and economic order. They more frequently feel social kinship with the men and women they visit in rat-infested tenements than with



"He says he can read the Nazi communique better that way."

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the exploitive employers and landlords who put and keep them there, or even with the oily-mouthed politicians and philanthropists who are their employers.

(5) The contradictions of today's social cataclysm have gone far to speed this process. Of all groups in the population except the unemployed themselves, it is hardest to convince social workers that the war boom has solved unemployment. Their day-to-day direct contact with the most impoverished sections of the population prove unmistakably that it's a colossal lie. Their social consciousness and, even more important, their political awareness, are now jumping ahead by leaps.

WELL, that is part of the background to the national conference in Atlantic City. Although I have worked in public and private social agencies in the East and Far West for nearly ten years, the present national conference was the first I have attended. Many of us were not surprised at the attempt Washington reactionaries made to pull social work, body and soul, into their camp upon that occasion. Compared with most other professions, social work has been pretty "backward" about parking itself alongside the diehards. And these diehards couldn't tolerate it any longer, because social workers have a very special role to play.

Their role comes in around the wondrous word *morale*. Generally speaking, morale is a good thing. Everything from a Chamber of Commerce to a People's Army has to have it to get along in the world. But Washington tories want social work to perform what *The New Yorker* would caption "the neatest trick of the week." It wants them to sanction the removal of the only material basis for morale, and then to pump in gallons of it from nowhere. In other words, it wants them to supply the "expert" testimony for the castration of WPA, NYA, CCC, FSA, civilian housing, child welfare legislation, direct relief, and all the rest—*and to make the unemployed and the exploited like it.*

Most of the delegates I talked to didn't coddle up too well to this morale assignment. Simple people, they continued to think of morale in terms of full bellies, well-clothed children, nice houses, real jobs—and they resented being asked to climb up a rope which isn't hitched to anything. Furthermore, they were wondering just what is going to happen to their own security. They only average about $28 a week the country over, you know. Don't draw the conclusion from this that there is truth to the old bromide that social workers welcome mass misery because it widens their work opportunities. It doesn't. It's during socially progressive periods, when the masses exercise telling political power, that social services are most fully supported. So, instead of storing up *ersatz* morale, they were wondering about the immediate future for the unemployed and for themselves.

But they did a lot more than wonder. These big evening sessions are only one part of a National Conference of Social Work. There are morning professional sessions (and these seemed to me remarkably sensible, even progressive, on the whole). And there are voluntary afternoon sessions conducted by several score associate and special bodies.

THE BEST ATTENDED of these—and by far the most significant from any progressive angle—were the meetings under the auspices of the Joint Committee of Trade Unions in Social Work, which coordinates the Conference activities of SCMWA and UOPWA members. At the three sessions conducted by the social work unionists—and they were attended by hundreds of unorganized social workers—the authentic voice of modern American social work spoke forth. Dr. Harry F. Ward, of Union Theological Seminary, analyzed present social welfare needs as the people know and feel them, not as the Chambers of Commerce disguise them. Lewis Merrill, UOPWA National President, pledged his organization, as a part of the CIO, to the continued fight for civil rights, labor's rights, all social rights. Marion Hathway, Executive Secretary, American Association of Schools of Social Work, etched deeply in the minds of her audience the fact that the best social work in the world is the social work the people do for themselves, through their own organizations; and that the battle for civil rights is the battle for everything that is social and decent. And then Rockwell Kent, president of the United American Artists (CIO), brought the social workers to their feet with deeply stirring testimony to the people's immovable determination to satisfy their cultural hungers.

The voice of the constructive elements in the field of social work also found expression at a luncheon held by the progressive professional monthly, *Social Work Today*. This was addressed by Bertha Reynolds, one of the ablest and most beloved of social work's professional leaders; Rose Segure, from the office of Carey McWilliams, California Commissioner of Immigration; Sidney Williams of the Cleveland Urban League; Jack McMichael, president of the American Youth Congress; Rudolph Hanson, organizer of District 50, United Mine Workers; and Dexter Masters, director of publications of Consumers Union.

There is much to encourage those of us who feel that social workers have a positive contribution to make to human progress and enlightenment. The reactionaries are by no means having things their own way among this group. They can, of course, count upon the articulate support of a few social work leaders, but as for the majority, they have been feeling the tug of history. They may not see all issues clearly, but along with the rest of the American people, they are taking their democracy and their security seriously.

THOMAS L. ROGERS.

Here in the City

All night the streets
lie thick with light;
all night the city streets run up and down
carrying the summer's heat;
all night the slap of feet
repeats incessantly along the street.
The crowded heat climbs up the tenement,
fingers the sleeper's dream.

At nine o'clock the child asked for a drink of water.
At ten o'clock the child, its hair flat with sweat,
whimpered, woke, and asked for a drink of water.
The mother saw prickly heat on its arms and legs,
pushed the bed a little nearer the window.

At one o'clock the child, its eyelids twitching,
woke and saw its mother's naked breast
and father's sleeping nostrils clutch at air,
wanted a drink, cried a little, slept again,
dreaming of melons. All night the heat
sat on the fire-escape. It was a pretty child,
blue eyes in smudges of shadow.

All night the flies
sizzled upward from the garbage pails
ranked along the alley to salute the dawn.
Out of the river to the eastward morning
came with a rattle of milk cans and a breath of air;
the early truck squealed in the street's emptiness.

The child woke in the asphalt-colored sunlight
and all the English sparrows sang together.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

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Whither the Catholics?

THE Pope spoke twice last week, once to the National Eucharistic Congress, and again in a special short wave broadcast last Sunday. Neither time did he take a clear cut stand on the Nazi attack against the Soviet Union. And while he did mention the "tide of black paganism" sweeping the world, "stronger than the Mississippi," which was interpreted as a reference to fascism, nevertheless his remarks were distinguished by their vagueness. A difference of opinion is therefore making itself vocal in Catholic circles. While one spokesman for the Catholic War Veterans implored the President not to implement his pledge of aid to the Soviet Union, a committee of prominent laymen and clerics came out strongly against any confusion of the issues, insisting that "the first enemy of humanity, killer of our priests, despoiler of our temples, the foe of all we love as Americans and Catholics is the Nazi." Hitler is still our greatest enemy, says this group, among whom are Colonel Donovan, the Rt. Rev. John A. Ryan of the Catholic University, and Michael Williams, special editor of the *Commonweal,* and "he must be stopped even if we and the Soviets are temporarily on the same side. . . ."

There is little question where the sympathy of millions of Americans whose forefathers came from central Europe now lies. The organized church has suffered deeply in loss of communicants and property in Poland, Germany, and Austria, its major European strongholds. Some Catholics have seen in fascism an authoritarian order, under which they hope that their institutions might somehow survive. But every Catholic knows that the "Aryan" mythology challenges a basic premise of the Church, namely that all men are created equal before Christ. And all of us have seen how the Nazis have bombed the Polish people, have forced Austrians to decimate Belgians, have turned Catholic against Catholic in a virtual civil war within the church. Certainly, official Catholic policy toward Spain is now admitted as disastrous: it degraded the Spanish people of Catholic faith and it only opened up the path for Hitler's victories over millions of other peoples.

So there is no reason why issues ought to be confused. Consider, for example, the stand of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union, or the stand of the Russian community in this country under Church influence. Our readers must have seen the dispatch which describes the special services in the Moscow cathedral attended by some 12,000 people, praying for the victory of Soviet arms. And messages to the same effect have come from the Primate in this country as well. This incident reveals once again the freedom of conscience which is guaranteed in the USSR by the Constitution. But more significantly, it indicates that religious elements among the Soviet people are in no way misled by Hitler's propaganda of a war against "atheism." American Catholics, with their powerful influence, have the same opportunity: to stand against Hitler propaganda no matter how skillfully disguised in religious forms.

Brown Derby to Brown Shirt

THE Brown Derby had a son, whom he called Junior. And Al Smith, Jr., is making good. He was elected to the New York City Council. He was made the head of an investigation into the Municipal Civil Service Committee. And some people thought the young fellow would use the investigation to improve democratic methods.

It didn't turn out that way. His old man upheld "liberty" by helping to form the Liberty League which turned out to be the very apple of reaction's eye. Now Junior is following in papa's footsteps. His investigation, it turns out, was inspired by the Christian Front and has the approval of Father Coughlin. And its purpose, far from spreading democracy, is to abolish the merit system in civil service and to exclude Negroes and Jews from many civil service jobs.

In fact, Al Junior's committee, after taking a crack at the CIO, after attacking the State, County, and Municipal Workers Union on the grounds that city workers have no right to organize, really got down to brass tacks. It selected as its quarry Paul Kern, president of the Civil Service Commission. Paul Kern was a monster, the committee claimed. He had spread civil service to many formerly exempt jobs that Tammany used to hand out, he had refused to deny the rights of Negroes and Jews under the merit system. The number of Negro and Jewish firemen, policemen and sanitation department employees had increased since Kern took office. More than that, Kern had publicly voiced his opposition to Nazi persecution of the Jews, had in other years called for Tom Mooney's freedom, had sponsored civil liberties, educational reform, and social legislation, had favored union organization, and had actually opposed vigilantism.

So Al, Jr., calls Kern a Communist. For proof—Kern believes in democracy and also admits subscribing to the *Daily Worker* and NEW MASSES. "If I were not permitted as a free citizen to subscribe for the *Daily Worker,* neither you nor Councilman Cohen would be here to criticize me," Kern remarked to the committee's counsel, Emil K. Ellis.

Obviously, Kern is *too* democratic. Al Smith, Jr., is intent on bringing about a *safe* democracy—in which books and newspapers are banned, or Jews and Negroes (and Catholics, Mr. Smith?) are kept in their place, unions don't exist, and civil rights are canceled. Hitler's program is similar—on a larger scale, of course. But like Junior, Hitler had small beginnings. And the only way to stop Hitlerism before it throttles life itself is to throttle it. The investigation headed by Al Smith, Jr., is fascism and nothing else.

Beating Jim Crow

"I LOVE America but I do not love the poll tax, lynching, Jim-Crowism, job discrimination, unequal education, and oppression." In that statement by Roscoe Dunjee, militant Negro editor of the Oklahoma City *Black Dispatch,* is the briefest summary of the problems tackled by the Houston convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Within each category of things we "do not love" is a multitude of related problems taken up by the 300 delegates. There is not only the poll-tax denial of vote, for example, but the "white primary." There is not only night lynching but murder in open court. And besides the problems that press most heavily on Negroes there are those common to all oppressed people, black and white—the whole fight for jobs and wages, the right to organize, civil liberties. To the delegates these issues are, of course, anything but new; it was the NAACP's thirty-second annual convention, and the issues existed before the organization was born. But at this meeting, in the Jim Crow state of Martin Dies, were reflected the progress, the strength that comes from long years of working together for common advancement.

A victory for all Negroes came during the course of the convention, with President Roosevelt's executive order against job discrimination in defense industries. The order is to be backed by a five-man enforcement board which must certainly include representatives of the Negro people. This, however, does not mark the end of the long campaign to abolish job discrimination. Negroes well know that no enforcement agency will be sufficient unless it is made, through pressure from the people, to function in accordance with its purpose. Surely the President's order was no real reason for A. Phillip Randolph, Negro Social Democrat, to call off the planned job march on Washington. This arbitrary action weakens the strongest weapon in the fight for Negro job equality—the weapon of demand and protest by which Negroes won the presidential decree in the first place.

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BOOKS ON THE SOVIET UNION

Honest and forthright information about the life and development of the USSR. The Dean of Canterbury' work leads a selected reading list compiled by Samuel Sillen.

THE London correspondent of the New York *Post,* William H. Stoneman, cabled his paper on June 21 that "More nonsense has been written and said about Russia than about any other country on this earth." Amen! And if anybody doubts Mr. Stoneman, he need only leaf through the files of the *Post* itself to find a Pelion of stupidity heaped on an Ossa of nonsense. Lies about the Soviet Union have kept more hack writers in business than one could easily count with an adding machine. For over twenty years, Soviet smearing has been a sure-fire meal ticket. Every publishing season hatches a brood of Goebbels quacklings goosestepping over the truth. Isaac Don Levine, Max Eastman, Sidney Hook, William Henry Chamberlin, Jan Valtin, Manya Gordon, Louis Fischer—their name is legion, and their reputations are mud. Like the loathsome beast of Spenser's *Faerie Queen,* they spew forth slander unconscionably and inexhaustibly.

American newspaper and book publishers have all too often pushed writers forward merely on the basis of their anti-Soviet bias. Solid information and decent integrity have been ignored while sensational crudities have been hailed as masterpieces. The most revolting example in recent months was the difference in the treatment of such a book as the Dean of Canterbury's *The Soviet Power* and Jan Valtin's *Out of the Night.* The first book, written by a respected English clergyman who studied the Soviet Union at first hand, was hardly reviewed, and the Dean was treated as a leper. But the second book, written by an escaped convict and an admitted associate of the Gestapo, was publicized with as much fervor as is *Mein Kampf* among Hitler's followers.

A portion of the reading public has been deceived and confused by this Krivitsky standard in book publishing. But a much larger number of readers are today good and sore about the way they have been pushed around. For it is now as clear as a crystalline sky that the Soviet Union is the antithesis of that make-believe monster which the literary gauleiters have been drawing. The "partner of Hitler" is fighting him with a methodical thoroughness which no other government has displayed. The "purge-weakened" are crushing the blitzkrieg which no other power has stopped. The "oppressed-by-dictatorship" have risen as one man in support of their freely elected leaders. And the "enemies of democracy" are acknowledged even by Churchill and Roosevelt to be fighting the front-line fight against fascism.

Increasingly, therefore, the man on the street, the average reader, recognizes that he has been taken for a ride. Life itself has persuaded him that Jan Valtin was a dismal hoax whose message coincided with Hitler's, and when he sees this Book-of-the-Month Club selection serialized by the Hearst press he is more than convinced that the eminent judges of the Club have either played him for a sucker or have been suckers themselves. The discrepancy between what he has been told and what he can now see for himself is too palpable. As an American patriot, as an anti-fascist, it is his essential interest to know the truth about the Soviet Union. The publishers must answer this demand for the sake of good business and for the sake of advancing the interests of the American people in this war-torn world.

In the meantime, the reader will turn to those books which, though in a minority, have told the truth about the Soviet Union. There are several distinguished and unimpeachable sources to which he will turn for information. He will want, of course, to make up his own mind. But he will have no scientific basis for doing so unless he turns to some, at least, of the first-rate books which have appeared in the past several years.

One of these books, *The Soviet Power* by the Dean of Canterbury (International Publishers, 35c), has already sold over 300,000 copies. This volume is perhaps the best single bet for the general reader, owing to its low cost, its comprehensive picture of all phases of Soviet life, its warm and informal style, and the indisputable objectivity of the author. The Dean is not only a religious leader but a scientist, his early training having been that of an industrial engineer. He is therefore equipped to deal both with the ethical and the technical advances registered in the Soviet Union since the October Revolution. His book is a crushing refutation of the anti-Soviet demagogy which is based on the premise of a religious crusade. In the preface to the American edition of his book, the Dean expresses the hope that it will help bring the United States as well as Great Britain int cooperation with the Soviet Union for a con structive anti-fascist victory, and there is n question that a wide reading of the book wil serve this purpose. Dr. Harry F. Ward de scribes *The Soviet Power* as "the most suc cessful [book he has read] in catching an conveying the spirit of the people of th Soviet Union, and is the most useful at th present time for the average America reader."

Three other books by Englishmen on th Soviet Union are to be especially recommende as throwing light on the present crisis. *Sovie Communism: A New Civilization?* by Sidne and Beatrice Webb (Scribners, $7.50) is detailed study by two of the leading socia scientists of the past fifty years. It is a clear cogent, and documented analysis of the cen tral economic and political problems in th USSR. Less expensive and more popular is *Light on Moscow* by D. N. Pritt, Labor MP for North Hammersmith (Penguin Books, 25 cents). Mr. Pritt is an eminent legal authority in Britain, a leader in the labor movement and chairman of the British Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR. A more recent book of his, *Must the War Spread?* (Penguin, 25c), is also useful. A third English volume is *Russia Without Illusions:* by Pat Sloan (Modern Age, 75c).

More and more readers will be turning directly to Soviet sources for first hand information. The best single statement of Soviet history, philosophy, and foreign policy is to be found in the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (International Publishers, $1), a volume which has already sold over 150,000 in the United States. Nobody, no matter what his political views, can speak with authority about Soviet backgrounds and attitudes unless he has read this book. It is a highly condensed, simply written summary of the facts and principles discussed in the works of Lenin, Stalin, and other Soviet spokesmen. If the reviewers and editorial writers spent half as much space publicizing this book as they do its opposite, *Mein Kampf,* there would be much more clarity in contemporary discussions of world politics. The reader who seeks a geographical and economic resources handbook will find it in *Land of the Soviets: A Handbook of the USSR,* by the Soviet geographer Nicholas Mikhailov (Lee Furman, Inc., $2.50). For the most detailed backgrounds of Soviet thought and practice, the reader will of course have to turn to the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

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A number of American observers have written excellent firsthand reports of their experiences in the Soviet Union: John Reed, Lincoln Steffens, Theodore Dreiser, Anna Louise Strong, Harry F. Ward, Albert Rhys Williams, Joshua Kunitz, Corliss Lamont, and others. Albert Rhys Williams' *The Soviets* (Harcourt, Brace and Co., $3) is an excellent survey by a well informed and long-time student of the Soviet Union. Anna Louise Strong's *I Change Worlds* (Henry Holt & Co., $3) is a more personal study; the same author has achieved a world-wide reputation as a penetrating and courageous reporter over many years, and her recent booklet on the liberated Baltic States will be found particularly useful. *We Didn't Ask Utopia,* by Harry and Rebecca Timbres (Prentice-Hall, $2.50) is an unusual personal narrative by two American Quakers who found their ethical ideals exemplified in the land of the "ungodly." Another personal report by an American which sheds light on the daily life and achievement of the Soviet peoples is Ruth Gruber's *I Went to the Soviet Arctic* (Simon and Schuster, $3). Traveling as a correspondent for the New York *Herald Tribune,* Miss Gruber was particularly impressed by the new status of women in a socialist society, a theme which is also treated in Fanina Halle's *Women in the Soviet East* (E. P. Dutton, $4).

Of the more easily available and more recent books about the Soviet Union, I would recommend with special enthusiasm Corliss Lamont's *You Might Like Socialism* (Modern Age Books, 95c), an indispensable guide, from an American point of view, to the structure and ideals of Soviet society. Mr. Lamont is concerned, in the first instance, with the lessons for our own country to be gained from the Soviet experience. The same is true of Earl Browder's books, the latest of which is *The Way Out* (International, $1.25). Mr. Browder's pamphlet on *The Economics of Communism* (Worker's Library Publishers, 5c) is a key introduction to the question of the relationship of economic forces between the Soviet Union and other world powers. Of other studies which have particular interest in the present crisis one should mention *Moscow, 1937,* by Lion Feuchtwanger (Viking, $2), and Beatrice King's *Changing Man: The Soviet Education System* (Viking, $2.75). In addition to these books, there are several periodicals which provide news and analyses which all students of Soviet affairs will find indispensable. These include the *Bulletin on the Soviet Union* and *The American Quarterly on the Soviet Union* (both issued by the American Russian Institute), and *Soviet Russia Today,* a lively and provocative monthly publication. The *Daily Worker,* published in New York, and *The People's World,* published in San Francisco, are the only daily newspapers in this country which present their readers with thorough coverage of Soviet affairs.

There are, of course, other books which have not been mentioned here, since this does

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not pretend to be a complete bibliography. Anyone, for example, who wishes to get a more intimate sense of Soviet life will want to read some of the translated novels and plays and poems by Soviet writers. Mikhail Sholokhov's novel on the Cossacks in the Don region will illuminate the cold press reports of cavalry action in the lower Ukraine, and I for one am looking forward to August 4, when Knopf will issue the completed text of the novel, the first part of which appeared under the title of *And Quiet Flows the Don.* A volume like Maxim Gorky's *Culture and the People* (International, $2.00) is a must book for any reader who would understand the cultural program and aspirations of Soviet writers. And there are many others.

In turning to such works as I have mentioned, the American reader who has become sick to death of Book-of-the-Month Club adventures will find the sources of genuine understanding. Whether one agrees with these writers or not, everyone, I feel, has a moral and an intellectual responsibility to examine and evaluate what they have to say. More than that. At a moment when so much of our own American future depends on the Soviets and our cooperation with them, it is only playing the game of Hitler to continue relying on Hearstian falsehoods parading as expert opinion. Yes, it is certainly true, as Mr. Stoneman told the *Post* readers, that "more nonsense has been written and said about Russia than any other country on this earth." But it is also true that a lot of good sense, forthright, honest, and informed sense, has been written about the Soviet Union. Events are compelling all of us to distinguish more clearly than ever before between nonsense and plain ordinary horse sense. And in that distinction lies the hope of better books and of more readers for those books.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

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of intimate notations from a telephone operator's log, all about the illness of Striker O'Reilly's little daughter, and the two drunken policemen helped home by pickets. But the method of keeping the log is also an excellent lesson for a union man. There is not a union which could not truly use this 167-page book and not a union member who could fail to love that "diary." Huberman has wisely used this portion of the book to give the events as they occurred, drawing the proper lessons on the spot. We meet the union leaders one by one and become well acquainted with them, anticipating Mike Quill's famous quips and almost hearing the brogue; waiting for John Santo to speak as the men yell, "Take off your coat, John!"

Huberman sets the stage for the diary in six short chapters, beginning the chronological log of events in the fifth, called "On the Eve." This is exciting stuff. Two of the earlier chapters, "The Companies" and "The Union," draw up the lines of battle. The companies are the New York City Omnibus Corp. and the Fifth Avenue Coach Co., with John A. Ritchie sitting as Chairman of the Board of both and the focal point of the strikers' righteous rage. (You get to know Mr. Ritchie quite well during the course of that diary.) Omnibus, with a yearly net income of close to $2,000,000, and Fifth Avenue Coach, which owns two percent of Omnibus, operate at a "loss," and all the time pay off magnificent dividends on non-operating income.

"The Union"? That was born out of "a twelve-hour day, seven days a week, with never a holiday off—not even on Christmas or July 4." The founders were mainly Irish, like most of the membership. Out of the early bitter and hard organizing days of seven years ago, came successes, consolidation—but bus drivers still suffered from ulcers or "driver's" stomach and a ten-hour day. And therefore, with a record of swift progress—but plenty of current complaints—the men were in no mood for "arbitration downward" of their demands last March. Against proposed pay cuts, laying off of conductors on double-deckers and elimination of sick benefits, they struck. After eleven days, the companies were ready for "arbitration upward."

One of the final chapters is called "The 'Friend of Labor.'" Here Huberman leaves Mayor LaGuardia finally stripped of the "pro-labor" garments which have been in tatters too long anyway. "The Press in Big Business" is a brief chapter which catches up a few loose ends left from the "diary," wherein we have already watched the big Red-baiting bombardment grow from day to day. It was a terrific barrage, the opening guns for Inglewood, for troops, and all the other ugly devices. Yet the workers were not fooled.

Leo Huberman has done a splendid report useful to unionists everywhere. *The Great Bus Strike* is recommended highly—particularly for these days when the press has intensified its campaign of slander and misrepresentation against the labor movement.

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FRANK CAPRA'S CHARACTERS

In "Meet John Doe," the fascist newspaper owner runs away with the picture. "Politics cannot be a mug's game," writes Herbert Biberman in an open letter to the famous Hollywood director.

DEAR Frank Capra,

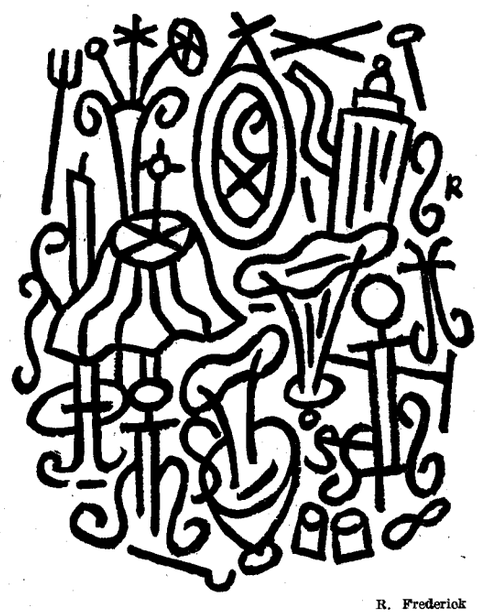
No one can have watched and studied your work or known you in the Screen Directors Guild without recognizing the purposefulness of your character. You are the only director I have known who regularly called his fellow craftsmen together to discuss scripts in advance of shooting. Your pictures have, in the main, revealed the search for content. Your probing of chosen material has marked you as no flighty purveyor of "pure" entertainment. On the contrary, you have emerged through your work as an artist who believes that what is most pertinent to men's lives is most relevant to their culture and entertainment.

If, therefore, your last work, *Meet John Doe,* presents much that needs challenging, respect for you demands that your friends wrestle with a tabulation of shortcomings and inaccuracies, and also attack the reasons for them. Let us base our examination, Frank, upon the uncontroversial question: are the characters and their relationships truthfully presented? If we also examine certain political generalizations emanating from the picture, this will be done not to engage in a political discussion, but to study your characters in relation to those generalizations. For it is, finally, by character and situation that your work must be judged. In attempting to measure this work, I shall use your two pictures which preceded *Meet John Doe; Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.*

What characterized those pictures? The resourcefulness, the creative humanity, and the utter honesty of your protagonists and of many around them. They were not isolated from material cultural traditions. They acted in accordance with and were deeply conscious of the militance and independence of traditional earthy Americanism. Your protagonists led the action. They assailed the forces of evil. They were positive and dynamic, quietly in the case of Deeds, pugnaciously in the case of Smith. For all the superficial difference in their personalities, they were brothers at heart in the union sense of the word. Suddenly, into this gallery of young Americans steps John Doe and with him, as a great shadow, comes a new theory. This theory had its inception in *You Can't Take It With You,* but in *Meet John Doe* it is no longer a tentative but a full-fledged philosophy. It is now so strongly felt by you that, for the first time in any of your pictures, the theory overwhelms the characters and takes the play away from them.

This theory is that politics are of no use; that "unpolitical organized neighborliness" should take over. Now, Frank, is this observed from life and people, or is it a special plea from you? Has it not forced you to distort the American character in order to make that character speak this special plea? And whose plea is it, and where does it lead? Are you counseling that politics be wiped completely out of American life, *or only out of the life of the common people?* For this assault on politics is not necessarily unpolitical. Nothing, indeed, is so political as the suggestion that politics be forgotten. You would apparently counsel the people to give up politics even though the fascist newspaper owner does not. You ask that people give their neighbors odd jobs to eliminate relief. You suggest that 10,000,000 unemployed accept permanent status as handymen, supported by airplane workers who, even after winning the Vultee strike (for example), make the munificent wage of twenty-five dollars a week. This private charity, you tell us, holds a more creative future for millions of Americans than does the WPA.

Where is there a factual basis for such a theory in the whole of American history? Was the Revolutionary War a manifestation of organized neighborliness of an unpolitical character? Were the Democratic Party under Jefferson, the Civil War, the right to free public education, the Wagner Labor Relations Act, women's suffrage, the Bill of Rights, or the Screen Directors Guild unpolitical events? Will "unpolitical neighborliness" prevent the eight-hour day from becoming the twelve-hour day? Our American political history is of prime importance to the creative artist because it underlies American character. An artist who ignores historical facts and the experiences behind the American way cannot make his story or characters work or play. No man can think or create for the people in opposition to the people.



R. Frederick

Can you, after Deeds and Smith, accept the notion that "politics is a mug's game?" Do you believe politics should be left to the mugs? The mugs, from Hamilton to Hitler, have tried to spread such a belief. They invented the phrase, hoping to engender surly disrespect for politics in the common people in order to abscond with the profit and power that sole control of politics would give them. Let us examine *Meet John Doe* to determine whether by accident or design it fits "politics is a mug's game." Who is the initiator of the John Doe Clubs? John Doe? No; the fascist newspaper owner, who wished to use the discontent of the people to gain his own ends. This was not the way the Abolitionist Clubs grew. Who leads the John Doe Clubs; a Thomas Jefferson, a William Garrison, an honest member of the American progressive movement? No. The leader of the John Doe Clubs is a declassed derelict, heading a movement he does not understand, believe in, or love. For him it is a job which will pay him enough money to recondition his pitching arm. Although such an objective is perfectly intelligible from his point of view, to present such a man as a typical leader of the American people is a travesty upon our history and our fellow citizens. American history has not been and will not be made by declassed derelicts.

John Doe constantly runs away, hides in hotel rooms, does the devious bidding of a conglomeration of culprits; and his final acts of "decency" for love of his girl make no sense at all, since they spring from nothing but animal impulse. *Meet John Doe* has no such scene as that in *Mr. Smith* in which the young senator strengthens himself with the memory of Lincoln before the Lincoln statue. Mr. Smith is a defender of America's present because he understands and defends America's past. There is no defeatism in him, nor is he an advocate of "unpolitical neighborliness." He was a fighting, "No For An Answer" American. So was Deeds.

In the two earlier films you began with the people; in *Meet John Doe* you began with the fascist. In the former the people act, in the latter they are acted upon. In the former they were observed from life, in the latter concocted out of theoretical confectionery. Deeds

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ıd Smith had faces. You could photograph ıeir alertness, their wit, their humanity. In ohn Doe you presented an expressionless ıask; not John Doe, the average American, ut John Doe, the legal abstraction, first cre-ted to suit the needs of corporate law and ow used by you to suit the needs of a story f corporate treachery. And here, Frank, is he crux of the matter. *Meet John Doe* is ıot a story of John Doe or the people but a tory of corporate treachery out of which you ry to twist a moral for the people without onsulting them.

The proof of this is in your character de-elopment. There is only one rich, positive, esourceful, and convincing character in *Meet ohn Doe.* That is the fascist, the real pro-agonist of your picture. The world is his tage and all the men and women on it his ılayers. It is no surprise that the philosophy vhich emerges from the film is *his* philosophy: 'Politics is a mug's game." And that phi-osophy is not only a negation of the best in he American tradition; it is also a negation ıf the tradition of Frank Capra as represented ɒy Mr. Deeds and Mr. Smith.

Let us examine the passivity of your "peo-ple." They are drawn like filings to a mag-net when the fascist sends out a call through his newspapers. They play no part in devel-oping, qualifying, or creating the movement. They just join. There is no more democracy in the John Doe Clubs than in the storm troopers. And since the people have no part in the movement's struggle, the whole thing falls apart when the leader rats. Contrast this with the history of the United Automobile Workers and their erstwhile leader Homer Martin; when he ratted, they threw him out and went on to organize and grow. It was their movement, not Martin's. They have a saying of Jefferson's—there should be an up-surge of the people every twenty years, but in auto it's every two years.

You may ask whether your exposure of the fascist does not make the film true and valuable for the people. But when you merely say that the fascists are mugs and the people should have nothing to do with them, you speak the mug's language. If the people do not struggle against the mugs the people are canceled out. For as long as you present no program of opposition to the powers of de-cadence and destruction, your rescue of the people from the "messy political struggle" leaves the people completely unprepared and helpless against attack. To ask the people to make the best of the present is to subscribe to pessimism, to counsel against growth, to negate and proscribe a better future. Noth-ing could be more opposed to the historical necessity which makes of the people the force of progress.

You yourself recognize this in part; for when your people are faced with destruction, you do contrive to set them in motion again. But when you warn them against the full im-plications of their actions, you lead them in two opposite directions at once; one historical and effective, the other abstract and immobil-izing. Those in power always attempt first to cajole into immobility those whose com-mon needs are drawing them together. Moral Rearmament, which swept the front pages of the newspapers a few years ago, asked us all to forswear selfishness, but it asked us to do so in the relative positions of the *status quo.* It hoped thus to perpetuate existing in-equalities and to end the struggle of the dis-possessed for their rights. Moral Rearmament failed because it was not of the people and invited them to frustration and self-destruc-tion.

Workable theory cannot be spun entirely out of the head of one individual; neither can workable character. Politics can be brushed aside neither in life nor in the movies. There is no escape from the struggle of reality. The people make history, they do not concoct it. They make it under tremendous pressures, on the basis of vast common interests and needs, under tested leadership, and indepen-dently of ruling classes and their false leaders and phony slogans. The genuine slogans come out of the mouths of Deeds and Smith, but never out of the mouth of John Doe.

We in Hollywood have a tremendous re-sponsibility to American history; a responsi-bility not to distort, to malign, to misrepre-sent motives. There is no better way to under-stand what our people are than to understand what made them that way. Study of our his-tory and character will lead us to tap the boundless resourcefulness, the independence, and the creative energy of the average Amer-ican, the real John Doe.

HERBERT BIBERMAN.

The Face of China

"Ku Kan" provides a fine introduction to the unbeatable Chinese people.

"KU KAN," at New York's World The-ter, is the record made by one man, alone with a technicolor camera, in the middle of China. During the past few years Rey Scott has made four trips to that country, traveling far up the Yangtze, ex-ploring Tibetan lamaseries, hunting the giant panda, following the Burma Road and the road leading to the Soviet Union, marveling at the wheatfields and fruit trees of the north-western provinces, filming universities and factories and cooperatives, living through an air raid on Chungking. The result is a docu-mentary film of extraordinary scope. Con-sidered solely as a travelogue, *Ku Kan* is a splendid achievement; it pioneers in explora-tion and photography of country and people we know too little about. But it is much more than a travelogue. Mr. Scott has centered his film on the heroism and the unity of the Chinese people.

The new China is presented against a back-ground of the old. There is much that is familiar; the strange sails of Chinese junks, the carved Tibetan temples. The film concen-trates, however, not on scenery and stonework but on the daily lives of people. Whether he is photographing a lama turning a prayer-wheel or a factory worker puddling steel, Rey Scott has a remarkable gift for catching character with his camera. The Chinese people are of a hundred different tribal strains, they worship in a hundred different ways, they have a million different faces to show the camera; yet in a sense they all have the same face. It is the face of determination. The bearded Mohammedan soldiers, the guerrilla fighters, the women of Chungking fanning themselves and waiting for the end of the air raid, all have the same unflinching eyes as the Japanese planes come over in the blue sky.

Following the chronology of Mr. Scott's travels, *Ku Kan* goes up the Burma Road to Chungking. We see the trucks going through, and the workmen endlessly repairing the pre-carious and often bombed roadway. We see Chungking itself, already damaged by raids, but still standing for the most part; and here we are taken to the university, moved bodily from the coast with its microscopes, its gym-nasiums, and its students. Factories, too, have been moved from the coast, equipment packed for hundreds of miles on the backs of men, such men as we are shown carrying military supplies slung across their shoulders and walk-ing with a spry little trot which minimizes the load. Cooperatives for handicrafts have been set up; we see the absorbed faces of the workers as they spin and weave and make rope.

Other scenes show us the guerrilla fighters leaving their fields and running to get their hidden rifles; the young men of the Chinese army reading their wall newspaper, drilling in front of anti-Japanese posters. Then *Ku Kan* moves on into less familiar country. Mr. Scott photographs the "shy people," moun-taineers in kilts, who come to the towns rarely but have come in numbers to fight Japan. He takes us through the sheep country, rather like our own West, where everyone eats mutton, and rice is a luxury. We see a cargo of melons ferried across the Yangtze on a raft of inflated goatskins; a craftsman carving a wooden saddle; a little girl trying not to look at the camera and failing, to her own amusement. As Mr. Scott swings south, we meet the ancient shrine of Kum Bum and Little Orchid, the giant panda. There is a delightful interlude in which Little Orchid gives Mr. Scott the works.

Ku Kan sobers again and moves swiftly to its climax. Back in Chungking, Scott photo-graphs the twin lanterns of the air raid warn-ing hoisted aloft. The people of the city move, soberly and without panic, to shelters beneath its huge walls and to the comparative safety of the opposite river bank. The fire-fighting trucks take their stations, and the few Chinese fighter planes take off.

Then the Japanese planes are over by dozens. Scott's technicolor is brilliant here; the air raid scenes have a horrible beauty that intensifies their tragedy. The little white planes, high up, drop their bombs and smoke flowers up from each crash until the entire

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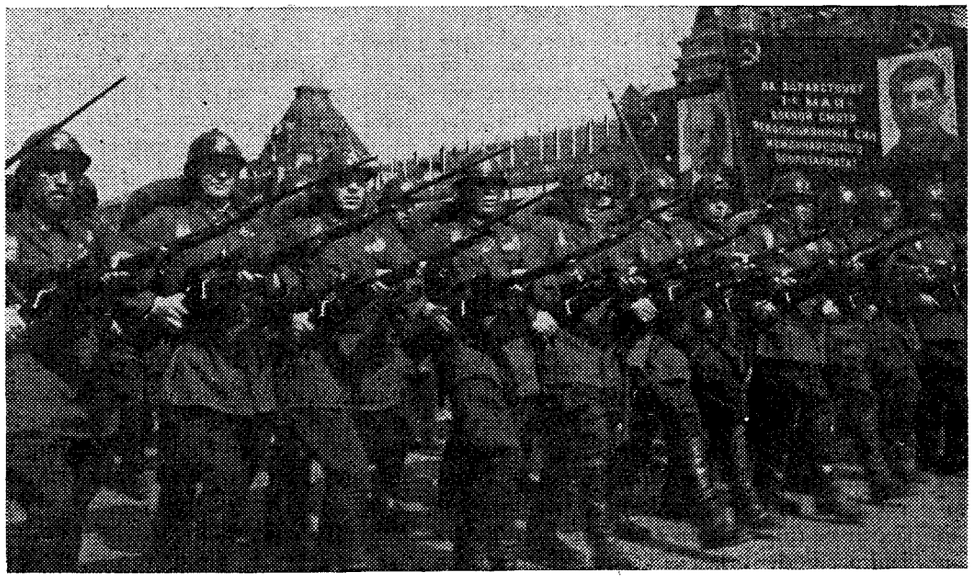

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city is lost from sight. Meanwhile there is the dreadful sound of crashing buildings, and the women on the opposite shore, watching their homes blown to bits, fan themselves quietly.

The air raid is over; but the fires are just starting. They are enormous, covering whole sections of the city, while the fire-trucks fight desperately against them with hand-pumps. One man runs with enormous wooden buckets to fill the pump's reservoir. Whole streets fall in with a crash, and the sun turns copper-colored behind the smoke. When it is all over, when the fires are dying and the daylight is gray again, the people of Chungking come to the ruins and begin, patiently, the work of salvage. The new war orphans are collected and given clothing.

It is impossible to convey the tremendous emotional intensity of these scenes. One thing does emerge; the resolve of China to go on fighting. *Ku Kan* shows this as well as talking about it. Perhaps the film emphasizes a little too much the personality of Chiang Kai-shek as the unifying force; the resistance of China's people goes deeper than Chiang. Similarly, one might ask for more than a casual mention of the Eighth Route Army. But *Ku Kan* does concentrate upon the Chinese people, does show the guerrilla fighters, does photograph the camel caravans arriving with supplies from the Soviet Union.

Inevitably, the picture has the defects of its merits. Its technicolor is uneven, sometimes a little shrill; Mr. Scott could hardly get ideal studio conditions along the Yangtze. For the most part, though, it is surprisingly good color. Scott's own running comment throughout the film I found a little annoying at times, when rhetoric threatens to run away with it. The sincerity of the commentator, however, saves him. In spite of technical crudities, *Ku Kan* remains a magnificent introduction to the unbeatable Chinese people.

"OUT OF THE FOG," the film version of Irwin Shaw's *The Gentle People,* has received a stylized production which keeps it from being a great picture. The unfortunate change of title sets the keynote; rarely, in the film, does Brooklyn emerge clearly from the haze. There is a certain staginess about the photography and the acting, and the tempo and rhythm of the dialogue, though unusual and interesting, manage by that very unusualness to seem slightly unreal.

In spite of all this, *Out of the Fog* is so good as to leave this reviewer without a chance to exercise her poison pen. A tale of decent, ordinary human beings threatened by a gangster, the film has obvious symbolism, and its final rallying of the gentle people to destroy the gangster is the rallying of the oppressed the world over. Fortunately, however, *Out of the Fog* does not rely on symbolism for its interest. The characters are sharply drawn, the situations valid. Stella, the telephone operator who wants something a little better than all the other girls in the subway get, is at times almost unbearably poignant in Ida Lupino's skillful hands. Her hopeless turning to the gangster who promises some sort of way out is a natural individual reaction as well as a symbol of defrauded youth's turning to fascist violence. And the two old men, a cook and a tailor, whose dream is freedom on a fishing boat and who are forced to pay protection money to the gangster, are people you have known on your street in Brooklyn or the Bronx or New Hampshire or South Dakota.

Brilliant acting by Thomas Mitchell and John Qualen brings life to the two old men, and John Garfield is appropriately hardboiled as the racketeer, a part which affords him little opportunity to get beneath the surface. In minor parts, Aline MacMahon, Eddie Albert, and Leo Gorcey stand out. The effect of the acting is weakened, however, by the unnecessary length of most speeches, a length which also slows down camera action and frequently makes the film seem static.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Acting as Fine Art

Some lessons from the Broadway season just past.

AN ACTOR, like any other human being, functions best in a collectivity. On this principle, among others, there was founded the late Group Theater, that desired—and in a measure succeeded in achieving—a continuous and closely knit organization that worked together, played together, was cognizant of the problems of its individual members, and assisted them over a period of time toward the development of their personalities, both as actors and as human beings. For just as it is true that by living an actor can learn better how to act, so it is also true that by acting an actor can also learn how to live. Given this ideal organization—a cohesive group that works together over a long period of time—and given the ability to act, direct, stage, light, and design—we should have the ideal theater, a true theater collective where the contribution of each individual counts toward the final product and exemplifies the validity of the slogan: From each, according to his ability; to each, according to his needs.

In the absence of a true theater collective, it is also true that individual performers, through temperament or training, can occasionally rise out of an undistinguished ensemble to achieve real distinction. The average Broadway acting company—a scattered group gathered solely for the purpose of a single production—is generally torn by contradictions. The "star system" prevails; the performer with reputation and a following is catered to, and he not only demands, but receives top-billing, on the billboards and on the stage itself. It is this system which almost invariably throws the entire performance out of focus, from the standpoint of an integrated job. In Soviet films and productions, you will notice that the least important roles

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are frequently entrusted to the best performers. This is only natural and intelligent, but that role will not be overplayed any more than the central character will dominate the scene—unless the exigencies of story or plot demand that he so dominate the scene. Each Soviet film I have seen exemplifies the artistic value of collective performance.

We have no theater collective in America, and actors of renown or of distinguished ability are generally exploited by producer and director to the detriment of the whole. People still come to the theater to see Ethel Barrymore or Cedric Squinch or Sir Ethelbert Clavering. And occasionally the "star" in question justifies their expenditure of time and money. But until we possess a truly collective theater, the star system will prevail, even though it is also true that a good actor cannot always "carry" a bad play or an indifferent company.

The season just past has witnessed a few performances that are worthy of mention, as individual achievements attained despite the current mode of production in the theater. We think immediately of Paul Lukas, as the anti-Nazi worker in Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine*. There is ample evidence in this production that little enough help was given the actor in understanding exactly what he represented, but to a large extent Lukas has overcome this handicap. For just as there is such a thing in the musical world as native musical intelligence, so it is also true in the theater that native acting intelligence can cover lack of understanding. We have all seen actors (and I am *not* referring to Mr. Lukas) who were in their own persons far from "bright," nevertheless achieve distinguished performances in roles representing profound insight and intelligence. This seems to be a miracle of sorts, but it can be explained. Mr. Lukas, despite the handicap of a play that muddles the issues and provides him with little "meat" into which to sink his teeth, nevertheless projects a valid emotional experience. To do so, he has undoubtedly had recourse to what is known as "effective memory"—the reaching back into his own experience and understanding, for the equipment he needs and the emotional content he is required to project. Without knowing Mr. Lukas it would be difficult to know how he went about this, but his *personal* emotional understanding of the plight of friends or relatives in Nazi Germany might just as readily as not have provided the springboard by which he was enabled to leap into the shoes of his character, Kurt Mueller.

In a minor role in the same play, this fact is even truer of George Coulouris, who plays the fascist interloper. Mr. Coulouris is a stunning performer, who rarely falls down on an assignment. If you did not see him in his earlier characterization in *Cue for Passion*, you must see him now, preferably in *Watch on the Rhine* and in the moving picture *Citizen Kane*. By watching him carefully you may gain an insight into the nature of true acting intelligence.

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For another case in point, consider the Mr. Apopolous of *My Sister Eileen,* Morris Carnovsky. Mr. Carnovsky has given us performances in the past that will never be forgotten by anyone who saw them: Papa Bonaparte in *Golden Boy,* Old Jacob in *Awake and Sing!*. The list of his truly creative achievements is long and distinguished. Bringing with him to the Broadway company of an indifferent play, his training as a Group actor and his unusual sensitivity to mood and character, he has not quite been able to overcome the handicaps imposed upon him. The role he plays has little meat in it; the company gives him practically nothing in the way of the sort of spiritual support an actor needs to project himself best; the direction is meretricious in the extreme, so that despite his magnificent equipment as a performer, he has not been able to do much with the character beyond the achievement of verisimilitude and humor.

In varying degree we see actors of talent struggling everywhere in a sea of mediocrity, and while it is generally impossible for a brilliant performer to redeem a poor play or a bad production, a collective theater can frequently do exactly that. The best example that comes to mind is the Group Theater's production of Sidney Kingsley's *Men in White.* A play that was a masterpiece of cliched thought and content, the Group gave it a production that kept everyone on the edge of his seat until the act curtains came down. Then you sat back and wondered "What in the world is this all about?" and echo answered, "Nothing."

In the stage production of *Native Son,* Canada Lee, in the character of Bigger Thomas, has brought experience and understanding. Here again, greater assistance in the form of writing, direction and collective work would have made possible a more creative job all around. To point an analogy, one need only remember Marc Blitzstein's special performances of *No For An Answer.* Despite almost impossible handicaps presented by Mecca Auditorium, and the absence of orchestra, scenery, lighting and costuming that was more than fragmentary, the actors worked as a group. They worked as a group because almost all of them were vitally concerned with the *ideas* projected by that play, and because the director, William Watts, knew how to get them to work as a group. And out of this group performance arose the memorable characterizations of Martin Wolfson and Curt Conway.

Just as a collective society will summon forth the energies and talents of the people in a way we have never seen before, so a collective theater can summon forth the individual talents of its cooperating personnel. In such a collectivity (social or theatrical) not only will the general level of production be higher, but those individuals already gifted with special ability will assume their rightful place, as leaders and illuminators of the human spirit.

ALVAH BESSIE.

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